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5. Ravana 6. Vasishta

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..... (within 10 words)

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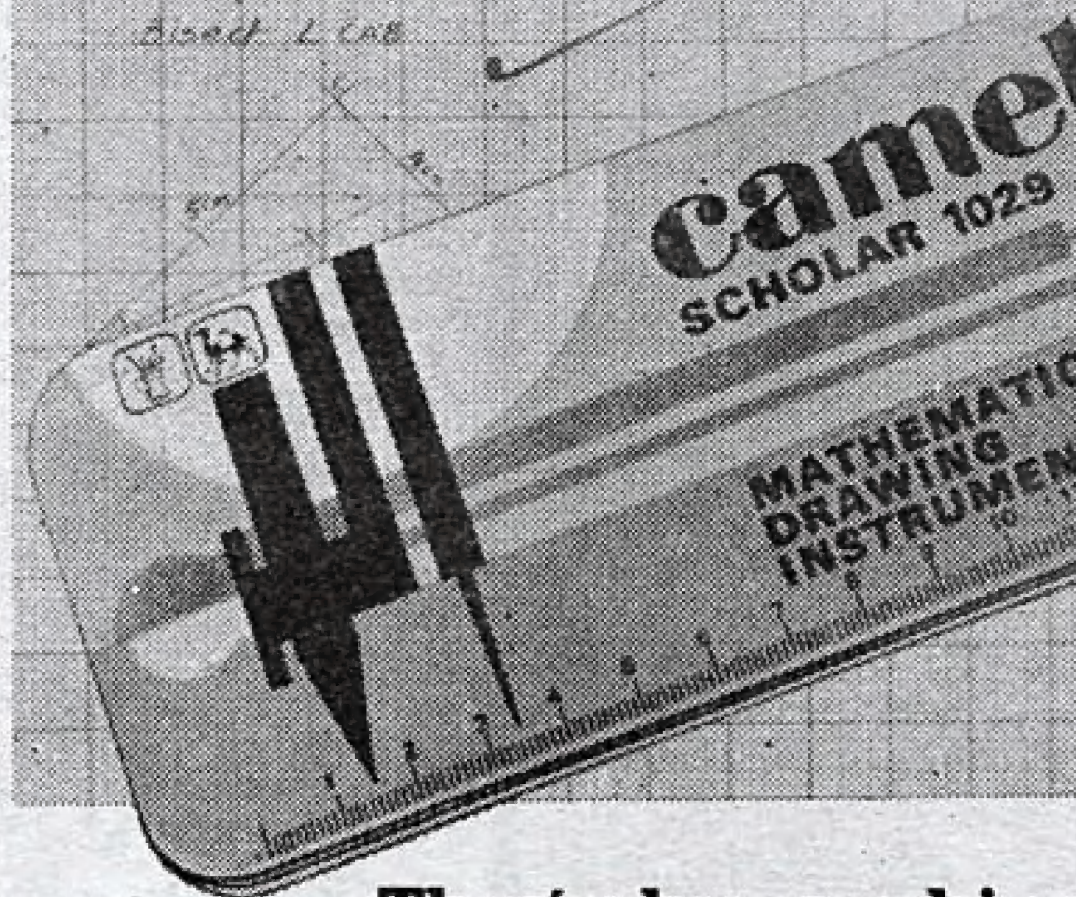
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NEXT ISSUE

- * *A Strange whirlwind strikes Gopa—in the Story of Krishna*
- * *The Prince and the Pauper: the beggar boy is going to be coronated!*
- * *The Greatest Mughal—in the Story of India*
- * *Nature's Kingdom presents a species of creatures protected by a legend*
- * *The Vanished Idol: yet another mysterious episode in Mallipuram*

A folktale from Bhutan, a legend of India, and an Arabian Night Story among an elegant bunch of tales and fables



Printed by B.V. REDDI at Prasad Process Private Ltd., and published by B. VISWANATHA REDDI for CHANDAMAMA CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND (Prop. of Chandamama Publications), 188 Arcot Road, Madras-600 026 (India)

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IN THIS ISSUE

Mythology:

Story of Krishna

... Page 11

Stories:

The Hare in the Moon

... Page 19

The Birthday Puzzle

... Page 26

Where are the Holes?

* ... Page 33

The Burglar's Brainwave

... Page 40

From Darkness to Light

... Page 42

Portrait for the Princess

... Page 43

The Right Man

... Page 49

The Fabulous Donkey

... Page 51

Queer Questions

... Page 59

Picture Stories:

The Prince and The Pauper

... Page 36

Rana Pratap defies Akbar

... Page 55

Features:

"Is Your Wife A Lady Doctor?"

... Page 17

The Dreaded Bermuda Triangle

... Page 23

The Flying Frog

... Page 34

AND Let Us Know, Newsflash, Contests and More.



SHARE YOUR AMUSEMENT WITH OTHERS

"A Funny Experience of my Life"—was the topic for our young readers to write about in March. They have responded splendidly.

The Winners are: K.Renuka Rao, Pune; Ivy Samuel, Calcutta; R.Jayashree, Calcutta.

Extracts from the prize-winning entries are to be found in the next page. Apart from the regular contest, readers are welcome to send articles on their funny experiences written in 200-250 words at any time. The interesting ones would be published as one-page features with illustrations and the authors would receive an honorarium.

Fun often depends on the way one looks at an incident and style in which the piece is written. The art of telling can impart more fun to the incident proper. We hope our young readers will bear this in mind while sending their contributions.

ANSWERS TO CONTEST 'B'

1. John Bunyan is the author and the book is *The Pilgrim's Progress*
2. Yehudi Menuhin
3. Kalidasa or Thyagraja

Winners: Nadim Anwar, Calcutta, and M.Suresh, Banaglore.

GOLDEN WORDS OF YORE

सुलभाः पुरुषा राजन्सततं प्रियवादिनः ।

अप्रियस्य तु पथ्यस्य वक्ता श्रोता च दुर्लभः ॥

Sulabhāḥ puruṣā rājansatataṁ priyavādinah

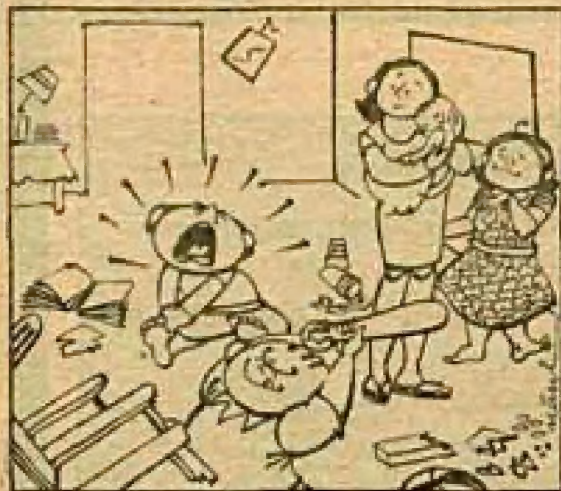
Apriyasya tu pathyasya vaktā śrotā ca durlabhah

There is no dearth of people who are ready to speak sweet words. So far as bitter but beneficent words are concerned, rare are the speakers and rare are the listeners!

— *The Ramayana*

THEIR FUNNY EXPERIENCES

Reproduced below are extracts from the prize-winning entries for the March '83 essay contest (Contest 'A'):



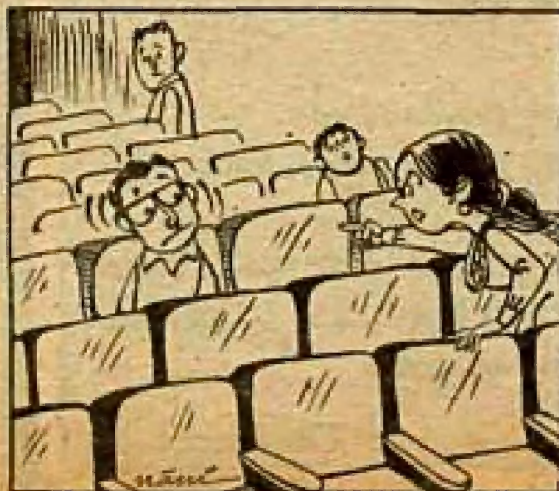
The Great Event

It was the exciting day when India was playing the last crucial test match against Pakistan. I switched on the radio.

"This is Dicky Ratnagar reporting from the National Stadium, Karachi. Sunil Gavaskar has just won the... potato and put it in the water to boil... Now sit erect and adjust your feet in such a way that... the salt is just enough.... Ravi Shastri to get the fantastic catch of Mudassar... Mudassar was trying to hook the... chilly to the chutney and... now hold your hands to touch the knees..."

Soon I realised that I was listening to three programmes simultaneously!

—K. Jayashree,
Calcutta.



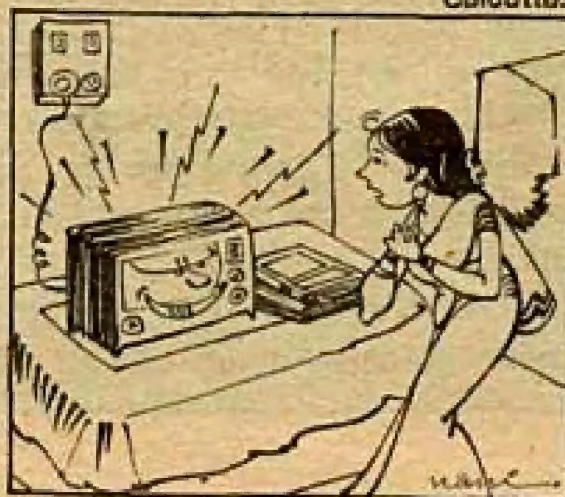
The Night I did baby-sitting

Once I was called upon to be a baby-sitter in my neighbour's house. The five year old girl, sure that the doll required immediate medical attention, sent a telephonic SOS to her family physician. The seven year old boy busied himself in taking the furniture apart to see if he could put it together again and the oldest girl, Nell, decided to entertain me by telling jokes that were as old as the pointed toes on great grandmother's shoes.

Just as I was on the point of slapping Nell and shoving a bit of cloth into the mouth of the youngest one who never stopped howling, their parents returned and thanked me for so ably managing the lot.

I accepted the pat and had just crossed over to the verandah when the chair in which the father sat collapsed. I speeded up. At the gate, I saw the family physician rushing in.

—Ivy Samuel
Calcutta.



The Mischief-Maker

While the movie was on, my friend grew very restless. I asked her for the reason. A look of horror covered her face while she told me, "I think the man behind me is touching me with something....." It was interval and my friend went out. I turned and faced the middle-aged man behind and demanded apology from him. He looked bewildered and that convinced me that he was innocent. My friend returned. As she was about to sit down, something fell off her back. It was a cockroach.

We realised who was making mischief. You should have seen our faces then!

—K. Renuka Rao,
Pune.

(Story so far: Kamsa, the demon-king of Mathura is warned by a prophecy that the eighth child of his cousin, Princess Devaki, would cause him death. The tyrant keeps killing one after the others Devaki's children as soon as they are born. At last was born the eighth child, the incarnation of Vishnu, in a stormy night. Under a spell cast by Goddess Mahamaya, all fell into a stupor. The child was exchanged with the daughter of Nanda, the ruler of Gopa. When Kamsa raised the infant girl to dash it to death, it slipped into the blue, announcing that Kamsa's destroyer was safe elsewhere.)

5. AN OGRESS ON A DEADLY MISSION

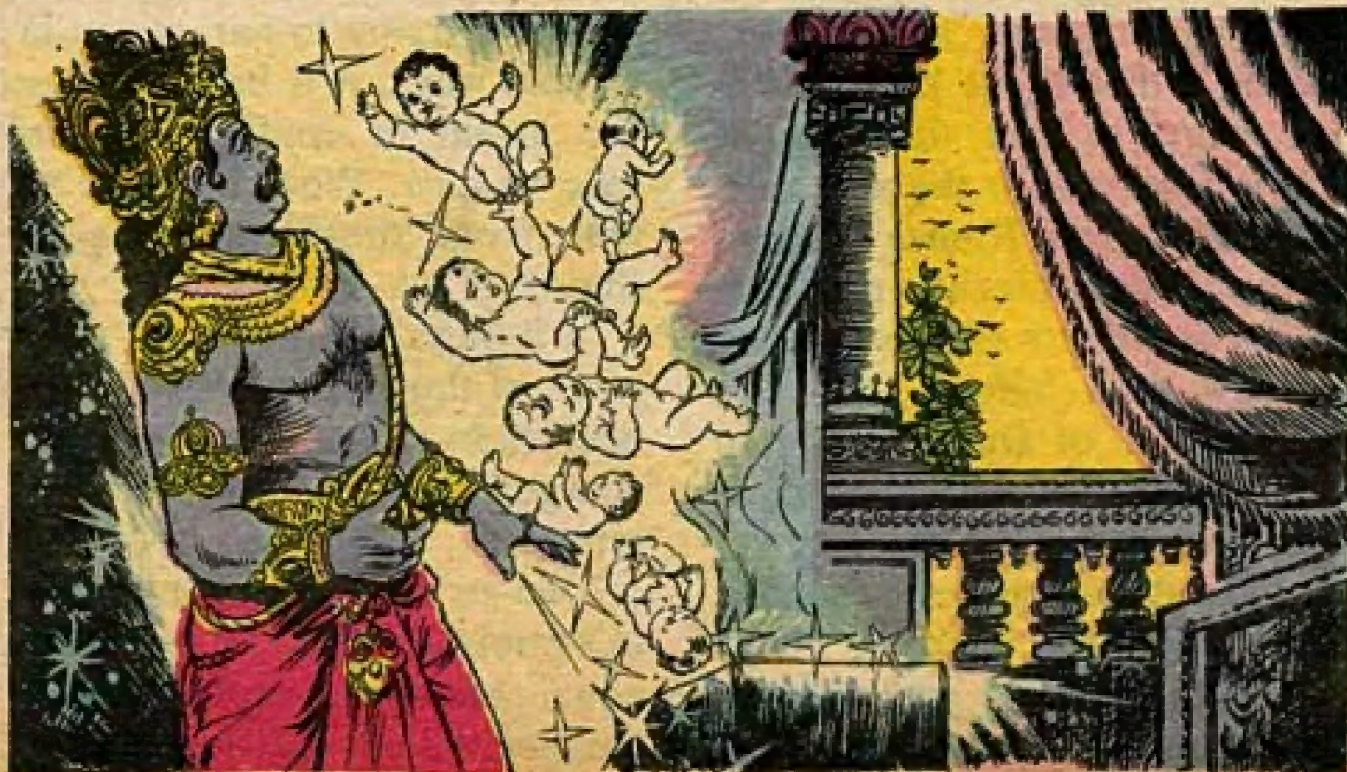
The lull that had followed a stormy night grew even more tense inside Kamsa's palace. The tyrant stood in his courtyard stupefied for long, his vacant look fixed in the sky as if still listening to the echo of the siren voice that faded into the clouds.

But a refreshing dawn was breaking out around Mathura. Birds had begun singing, whist-

ling and chirping in the gardens and orchards around the castle.

And a ray of tender sunlight focused on the slab of stone that Kamsa had used to destroy the infants.

Suddenly the stone looked hideous and terrifying to him. It was the reminder of his gruesome crimes. He wondered: of what avail was all his misdeeds? If it was his sinfulness that had





972
wanted to kill Devaki. I had stopped you from doing that. But we have lost all zest for life. Why don't you put both of us to death and end our anguish?" Vosudev asked in great earnest.

"My brother, I've come to set you free. Indeed, I've been extremely cruel to you and I'm awfully sorry about it. It is all due to the mischief of gods. But I'll see how long they can mislead me and trick me."

Kamsa apologised to Devaki and Vosudev in many more words and arranged for them to depart to their home. Then he summoned an urgent meeting of his ministers.

The ministers had already heard of the latest incident. "My lord," said one of them, "if the gods are trying to harass you in myriad ways, it is because they are afraid of confronting you face to face. What have we to fear from those who are so timid?"

"I'll never forget how once some of the gods ran away, like deer before a tiger, when you charged at them," said another minister.

Two or three more of Kamsa's ministers spoke of gods with equal contempt and they all laughed wildly. Kamsa who had

provoked the gods to announce his doom, he had only added to his sins in trying to forestall that doom! A spy had reported to him what some sages were saying—that those kids he killed were in fact devotees of Vishnu born with the sole purpose of making Kamsa's record of misdeeds as black as possible!

The sunlight was growing, but he saw dark before him. The tearful face of Devaki haunted him. Slowly he walked towards her chamber. She had not yet recovered her senses. Vosudev sat by her side, nursing her.

"What more do you want of us, Kamsa? Once you had

been so remorseful a little while ago grew gleeful again.

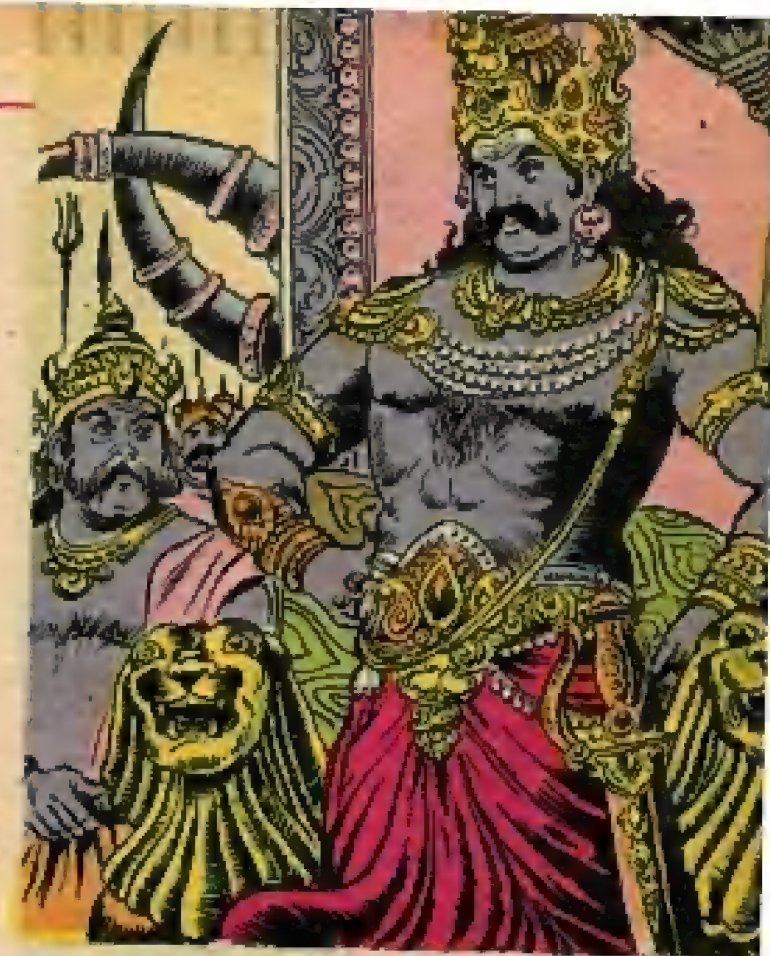
But one old minister sat grave. After their laughter subsided, he said, "No doubt, our king is a hero nonpareil. The gods are no match for him and I won't care two hoots for them. But I have heard of the sages speaking about Vishnu Himself coming down to crush the demons. That certainly worries me! It is said that He is supremely mighty. If He wishes to do something, resistance put forth by all the demons would be like a spoonful of sand thrown to stop a surging wave!"

The old minister's words spread a wet blanket on the enthusiasm of the others. A minute passed in gloomy silence. Kamsa suddenly slapped his thighs and roared out, "But I cannot resign myself to Vishnu's mercy. I'll do everything to wreck his scheme. Come on with your suggestions to help me do that."

"I've an idea. Your foe is just born—though we do not know where. Right?" asked a minister.

"Right," responded Kamsa.

"Why not kill all the babes in our kingdom and around it that are less than a year old?" the



minister asked again.

"What a bright idea!" exclaimed Kamsa. All the others echoed his words. Kamsa immediately rewarded the minister with one of his gold necklaces.

Within an hour the most crafty, vicious, dangerous and gloating demons and ogres were called to the king's secret chamber.

"All the infants of my kingdom and of the neighbouring kingdoms—those who are yet to cross a year—are to be killed. How to do that is your business!"

The demons and ogres looked at one another, their eyes glowing like burning coals. Some



could scarcely suppress their glee and wringed their hands with impatience and made roguish sounds.

"My lord, you are giving us a job that is so dear to our heart!"

"O King of kings, for long we have not done anything so exciting!"

"Since you began killing Devaki's children, we knew that to kill kids was the most ideal sport and we were just dying to try our hands in it!"

The demons and ogres thus candidly expressed their sentiments.

"I'll change into a jackal at night and a panther at dawn and

drag away children from their homes," said one.

"I've a couple of vampires as pets. I'll straightway knock on door after door, look for children, and set my pets to make short work of them when found," said yet another.

"But none of you can enter the houses of the nobility. Can you?"

The challenge came for Putana, an ogress notorious for her craftiness.

Kamsa's face brightened up as he looked at her. "I've great faith in your capacity, you know!" he commented.

"I know that," Putana said proudly. "I bet I'll succeed where all these chaps fail. My breast contains deadly poison and any child whom I suckle shall instantly meet its death.

"How marvellous!" exclaimed Kamsa.

Gopa, the prosperous village on the other side of the river Yamuna, was all agog with joy, for Nanda, the king of Gopa, had been blessed with a son. While the menfolk were busy organising a festival to mark the event, the ladies of Gopa were out to congratulate their queen, blowing conch-shells and car-

rying garlands, bouquets, and several fragrant items.

When most of them had departed, a beautiful lady was seen approaching the castle. She was bedecked with glittering ornaments and majestic was her gait.

That festive week the castle gates had been thrown open to all visitors. Nobody stopped the lady, though the guards knew that she did not belong to Gōpa.

The unknown lady was warmly received by Queen Yaso-da's maids. They thought that she too, like the others, had come to greet the queen.

"I heard that the royal couple is blessed with a son. I am most eager to have a look at it, for I've lately lost my own child!"

"How sad! From where do you come, sister?" asked the queen's chief maid.

"From Mathura," replied the stranger as she showered on the queen many a loving word. As her eyes fell on the child lying in a bejewelled cradle, she gave a start—as many others before her had given. For so charming a child none had ever seen.

But nobody noticed the terribly malevolent glare her eyes gave out for a second.

She gazed at the child for



long, and fixing an innocent look on the queen, said pleadingly, "O gracious queen, since I lost my own child only the other day, I feel an irresistible urge to suckle your son. Will you allow me to do that?"

"With pleasure, my sister. Look upon my child as yours. Let the child grow strong with your blessing," the queen said affably.

"Of course the child is already strong for his age which, I understand, is only few days!" commented the lady as she began feeding the child from her breast. And soon her face showed surprise. She said again,

"Strong indeed he is—unusually strong I should say. How he sucks!" added the lady, her voice abnormally high, as if she was being tormented.

"Stop, stop! Will You?" she was seen shrieking and trying to throw the child off her breast in another moment. Her face looked weird. Her appearance was changing fast.

Astonished, the queen and her maids tried to take the child away from her, but they could not. The lady was growing to an enormous size. The child hung on to her breasts, but it was far above the reach of the others.

Her face grew sinister and huge, her hand and thighs were like oak trees. With a piercing cry that shook the castle, she collapsed. A wall gave way to

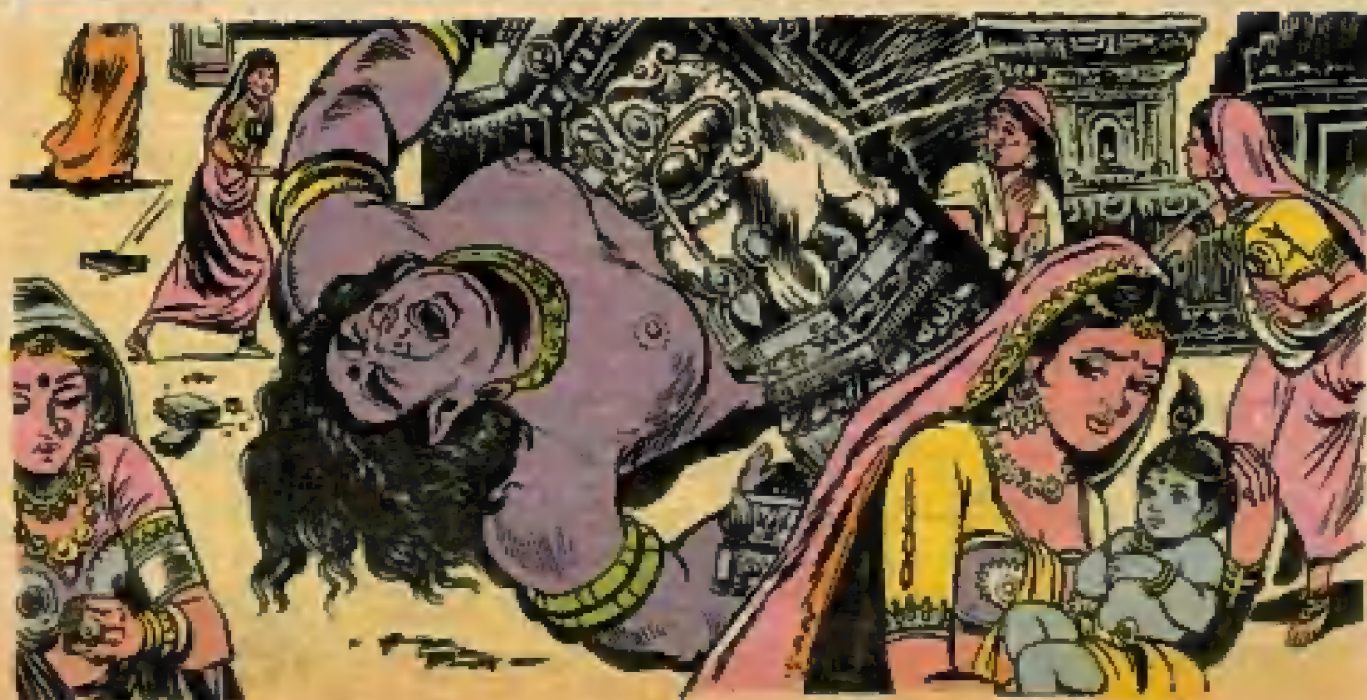
her falling body, shattering a portion of the queen's apartment. A pillar was ground to dust in her deadly grip.

Inmates of the castle and servants and guards rushed to the spot. They were followed by a crowd. The queen had swooned away.

Her maids climbed to the chest of the ogress and lifted the child.

"O my God, why did this ogress come here assuming a human form?" wondered Nanda.

"But this is Putana!" revealed one who knew her. "Obviously the ogress wished to kill the child by feeding him with poison from her breast, but the child seems to have sucked out her life!"



"Is Your Wife A Lady Doctor?"

Rajesh!"

"Yes, Grandpa."

"What were you laughing about with Reena?"

"Grandpa, do you remember that young officer whom we met yesterday at the railway station? He asked the old Mr. Roy if his wife was a lady doctor! Do you know what Mr. Roy said?"

"No."

"He said, 'She is just a doctor. She had to be a lady since she is my wife.' The old gentle-

man, Mr. Roy, though he is a gentleman's gentleman, can be very witty if he wishes."

Grandpa Chowdhury laughed. "Yes, in the present case 'lady' was superfluous. By the way, Rajesh, call Mr. Roy a gentleman, but never a gentleman's gentleman," said grandpa.

"Why?"

"The term 'Gentleman's gentleman' means a valet. Also avoid saying 'old gentleman'



For some that term means the Devil."

"My good God!"

"It is good to remember God instead of Devil. And Rajesh, when you presented that young officer to Mr. Roy yesterday, you first introduced Mr. Roy to the officer, didn't you?"

"Right. I did."

"But that is not right. When you introduce two persons, introduce the one younger in age or junior in position to the older or the senior."

"How strange! I thought the senior deserved to be introduced first!"

"No, you respect the senior more by presenting the junior to him."

"I see."

"And did you observe the young officer putting forward his hand for shaking hands with Mrs. Roy?"

"Was anything wrong in that?"

"Yes. He should have waited for Mrs. Roy to extend her hand first—if she pleased. A man should not oblige a lady to shake hands with him by showing his hand first."

"I'll remember this. Thanks, Grandpa."



THE HARE IN THE MOON

—By *Ruskin Bond*

Look at the moon on a clear moonlit night and you will see as if a tiny creature, resting carefree on that cosy golden cushion is looking at you...

*An old Buddhist legend is retold by Ruskin Bond, one of the finest story-tellers of our country. Born in 1934 of British father and Indian mother and educated as a child in England, Ruskin Bond won the Jon Llewellyn Prize of U.K. for his novel **The Room on the Roof**, but chose India for his home. He lives in Mussoorie and writes with equal ease for both adults and children.*

A long time ago, when animals could talk, there lived in a forest four wise creatures—a hare, a jackal, an otter, and a monkey.

They were good friends, and every evening they would sit together in a forest glade to discuss the events of the day, exchange advice, and make

good resolutions. The hare was the noblest and wisest of the four. He believed in the superiority of men and women, and was always telling his friends tales of human goodness and wisdom.

One evening, when the moon rose in the sky—and in those days the moon's face was clear





and unmarked—the hare looked up at it carefully and said: “Tomorrow good men will observe a fast, for I can see that it will be the middle of the month. They will eat no food before sunset, and during the day they will give alms to any beggar or holy man who may meet them. Let us promise to do the same. In that way, we can come a little closer to human beings in dignity and wisdom.”

The others agreed, and then went their different ways.

Next day, the otter got up, stretched himself, and was preparing to get his breakfast when he remembered the vow he had

taken with his friends.

“If I keep my word, how hungry I shall be by evening!” he thought. “I’d better make sure that there’s plenty to eat once the fast is over.”

He set off towards the river.

A fisherman had caught several large fish early that morning, and had buried them in the sand, planning to return for them later. The otter soon smelt them out.

“A supper all ready for me!” he said to himself. “But since it’s a holy day, I mustn’t steal. Instead he called out: “Does anyone own this fish?”

There being no answer, the otter carried the fish off to his home, setting it aside for his evening meal. Then he locked his front door and slept all through the day, undisturbed by beggars or holy men asking for alms.

Both the monkey and the jackal felt much the same way when they got up that morning. They remembered their vows but thought it best to have something put by for the evening. The jackal found some stale meat in someone’s backyard. “Ah, that should improve with age,” he thought, and took it home for his evening meal. And

the monkey climbed a mango tree and picked a bunch of mangoes. Like the otter, they decided to sleep through the day.

The hare woke early. Shaking his long ears, he came out of his burrow and sniffed the dew-drenched grass.

"When evening comes, I can have my fill of grass," he thought. "But if a beggar or holy man comes my way, what can I give him? I cannot offer him grass, and I have nothing else to give. I shall have to offer myself. Most men seem to relish the flesh of the hare. We're good to eat, I'm told," And pleased with this solution to the problem, he scampered off.

Now the God Sakka had been resting on a cloud not far away, and he had heard the hare speaking aloud.

"I will test him," said the God. "Surely no hare can be so noble and unselfish!"

Towards evening, God Sakka descended from his cloud, and assuming the form of an old priest, he sat down near the hare's burrow, and when the animal came home from his romp, said: "Good evening, little hare. Can you give me something to eat? I have been fasting



all day, and now I am so hungry that I cannot pray."

The hare, remembering his vow, said: "Is it true that men enjoy eating the flesh of the hare?"

"Quite true," said the priest.

"In that case," said the hare, "since I have no other food to offer you, you can make a meal of me."

"But I am a holy man, and this is a holy day, and I may not kill any living creature with my own hands."

"Then collect some dry sticks and set them alight. I will leap into the flames myself, and when I am roasted you can eat me."

God Sakka marvelled at these words, but he was still not quite sure, so he caused a fire to spring up from the earth. The hare, without any hesitation, jumped into the middle of the flames

"What's happening?" called the hare after a while. "The fire surrounds me, but not a hair of my coat is singed. In fact, I'm feeling quite cold!"

As the hare spoke, the fire died down, and he found himself sitting on the cool sweet grass. Instead of the old priest, there stood before him the God Sakka in all his radiance.

"I am God Sakka, little hare,

and having heard your vow, I wanted to test your sincerity. Such unselfishness of yours deserves immortality. It must be known throughout the world."

God Sakka then stretched out his hand towards the mountain, and drew from it some magic element. This he threw upwards towards the moon, which had just risen, and instantly the outline of the hare appeared on the moon's surface.

Then leaving the hare in a bed of sweet grass, he said: "For ever and ever, little hare, you shall look down from the moon upon the world, to remind men of the old truth, 'Give to others, and the Gods will give to you.'"



THE DREADED BERMUDA TRIANGLE

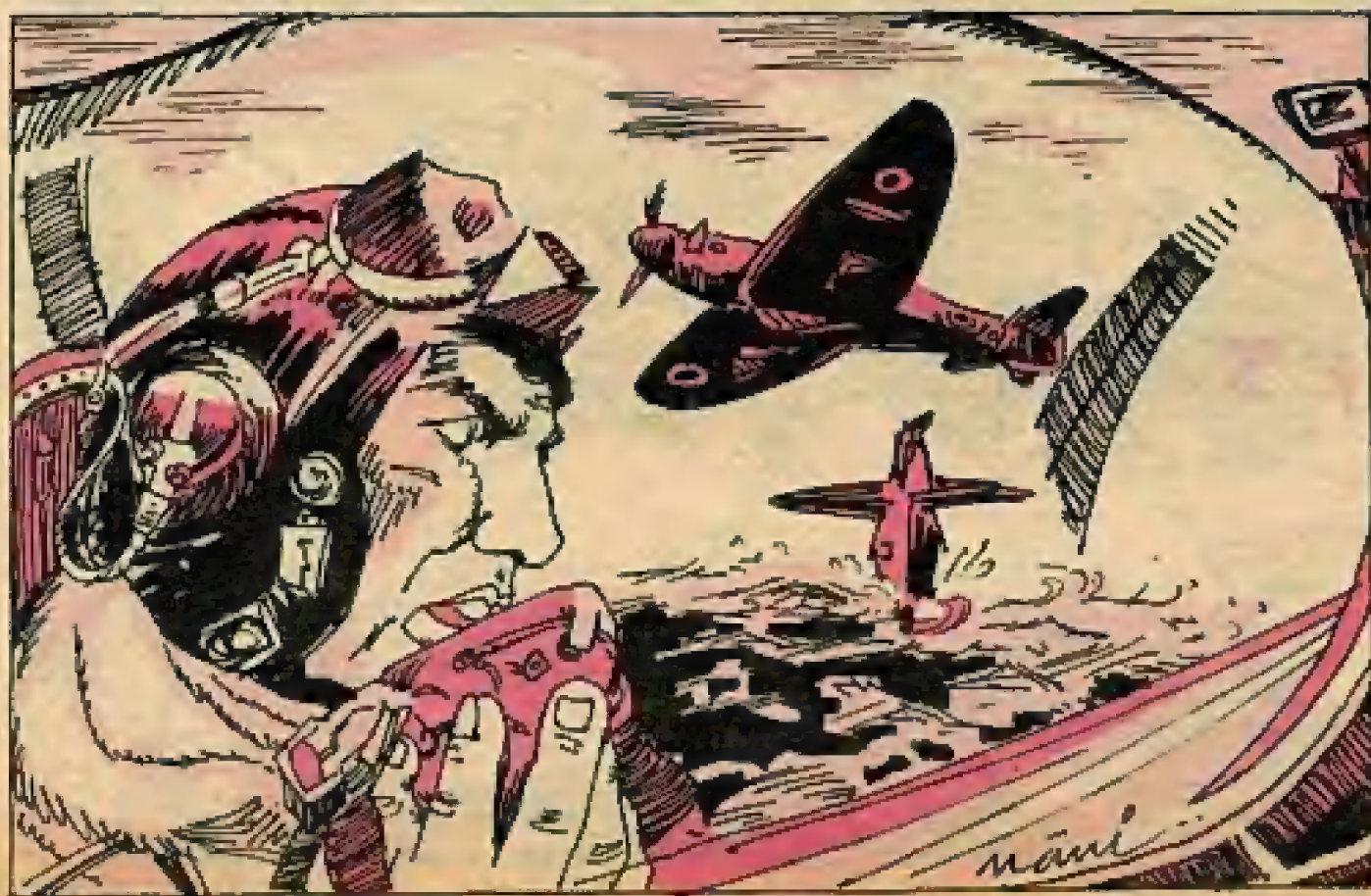
There is an area in the Western Atlantic Ocean which not only the mariners but also the pilots would like to avoid. It is between Bermuda and Florida and known as the Bermuda Triangle.

"We don't know which way is west. Everything is wrong... strange... we can't be sure of any direction. Even the ocean does not look as it should..."

On 5 December 1945 the

flight leader of five bomber planes sent this disturbing message to the control tower at Fort Lauderdale. His voice was heard once more shortly thereafter, but he fell silent before completing a sentence. Nothing was known about the fate of his five planes. No trace of either the aircrafts or its crew was available.

Instantly a plane loaded with boats and 13 men was sent to



the area.

Officers at the control tower anxiously waited for their message. Have they traced the missing planes? Are the members of the crew of the five planes safe?

Minutes ticked away. No message came from the rescue party. Nothing was heard of it even after hours and days. Nothing more than the other five planes has been heard about it since then!

They were passing through the space over the Bermuda Triangle.

There is a list of over two

hundred ships and planes missing in the Bermuda Triangle, including the British ship *Atlanta*, lost with 250 persons in 1880 and the American ship *Cyclops* lost with 309 passengers in 1918. Among the recent casualties are the ship the *Sulphur Queen* lost with 39 aboard in March 1963, followed by *Sho' Boy* with 40 aboard in July, the same year. Before even a full month had passed—on 28 August—two huge 4-engine jet planes of the Air Force entered the area never to come out of it.

Tragedies have struck ships



nam

and planes even in the seventies. What is intriguing, none of the missing ships or planes has left any message to determine the cause of its disappearance. Thorough searches yield no clue. No wreckage are seen.

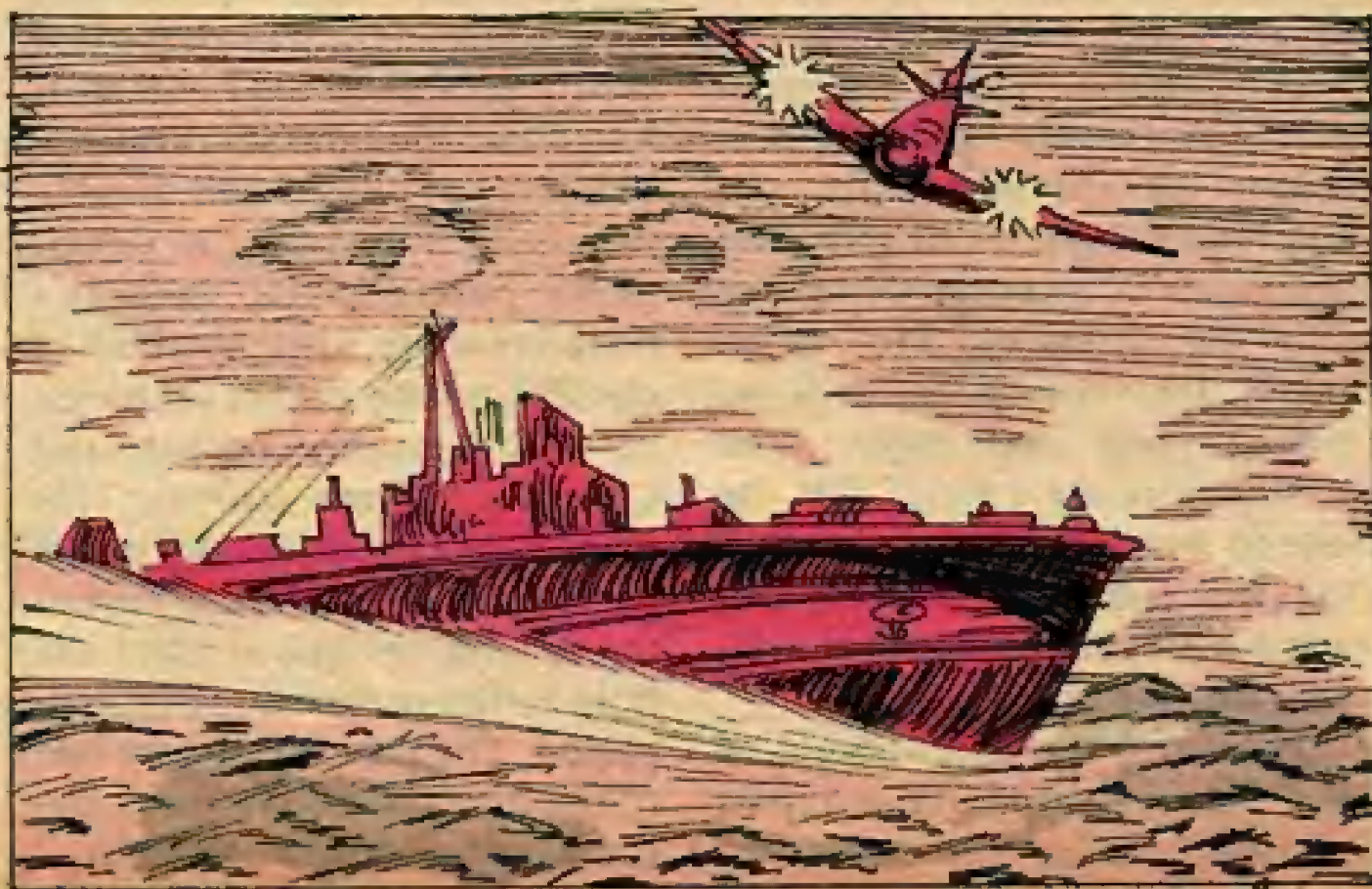
Records show only one exception. But that was even more mystifying.

That happened in 1840. A large French ship, Rosalie, given up for lost, was found tossing on waves near the Bahamas. It had crossed the dreaded Triangle. Not even one item from its cargo or the

belongings of its passengers was missing. But not a soul was inside!

What happened to its passengers and crew? There was no sign of mutiny, no sign of violence, nothing to give any clue to their fate.

If some believe that a radiation is emitted in that area and its beams destroy the ships and aircrafts, others even believe that travellers from space might have planted some signals for them to arrive in future and they have placed devices to keep the place always free from men.



namt...

THE BIRTHDAY PUZZLE

—By Randor Guy

Citizens of Mallipuram were bubbling with joy and every man and woman in the kingdom dreamt of winning the prize. Indeed it was something anybody would dream of winning. Nine big prosperous villages—nine elephants—nine horses—and nine bags of gold, diamonds, pearls, rubies, emeralds, and other precious stones. The occasion was the birthday of King Parakram that fell that year on the ninth day of the waxing moon. The king loved gaiety and never lost an opportunity for spreading joy and sunshine among his people. The grandest occasion for doing this was his birthday. He entertained his subjects all with repasts, music and dance, and games of many a kind. But the one to which his people, including his courtiers, looked forward with zeal and enthusiasm, was the birthday puzzle!

Prachara, the chief herald of the palace, stood on a raised platform under the spreading

banyan tree, a couple of drums slung round his neck. Large crowds gathered all around him waiting for the announcement of the details of the birthday puzzle. Even palace-officials stood in the crowd with curiosity, some biting their nails, unable to contain the excitement.

And Prachara began to speak after he had beaten the drums nine times!

"Greetings from our beloved King Parakram! May peace and plenty prevail all over our great kingdom, Mallipuram. Our noble king has chosen this humble person to announce the details of the puzzle for His Majesty's birthday. The king has built a circular palace on the outskirts of Mallipuram, beside the Queen's mango grove. This palace has nine doors and on his birthday King Parakram will enter it with his queen after the holy birthday ceremony is completed. The puzzle is, which one of the doors will King Parakram use to enter the circular palace?

The winner who guesses correct shall win all those prizes, you all know about... nine villages....."

Loud cheers drowned the rest of his speech!

Prachara's drums thumped once more, and silence descended in moments, and people surged forward to hear him better! "May I have your ears and attention, please?" he began to thump the drums again, and stopped. "King Parakram wishes to announce that this puzzle is open to all citizens of Mallipuram, and no distinction of any kind shall be made. The answers to the puzzle lies deposited in the custody of the king

and the queen."

King Parakram laughed, throwing his head back, a sure sign of joy, "Yes, my dear Sidhanta. I mean what I say. When Prachara has announced with his drumbeats that the prize is open to all my subjects, that includes all my ministers and, surely, includes you, the wise Sidhanta!"

"Dear King, is it a challenge or....?" Sidhanta ran his fingers through his long silvery beard.

"Let's say it is a challenge for your intelligence. You have solved so many of crimes and problems. This is of course





something different, but this can be a greater challenge to you than a mere crime! Try your luck, Sidhanta!"

"Luck? Your Majesty, do you think that I can solve this puzzle by just being lucky? Nothing can be solved by mere luck. Brain and hard work together solve problems, not just luck, my lord."

"I like your spirit, Sidhanta. Enter this contest, and let me see if you can win the prize. But there will be many competitors."

"Great King, competition makes it more exciting. Yes, I shall take part in your birthday

puzzle, certainly!"

"Sidhanta, that's the right spirit. Let me see if you win—and how you win. It will not be easy."

"No victory is ever easy, you know it, I am sure!" Sidhanta smiled at Parakram, his hands pulling at the beard hard.

"You said it, my wise friend."

"Dear King, I shall visit the new palace at once, and start work on this great puzzle!"

"Sidhanta, you think that by looking at it you can find the answer?" Parakram burst into a loud laugh. Sidhanta realised that the king was testing him and smiled softly in return.

"One more thing, Sidhanta, once you go to that palace, our worthy subjects will see you and know that you too are taking part in this birthday puzzle and if you lose.... I don't wish to point out the public reaction!" He laughed again. Sidhanta stared at his kind master and remained silent.

Sidhanta stood inside the circular palace, and allowed his sharp eyes to do their duty. He never believed in mere seeing, and had trained himself to observe. He knew even from his childhood that there was a world of difference between

seeing and observing. His wise father, a scholar, had taught him that valuable lesson which had paid him ample dividends. A large crowd bowed to him, and he could hear whispers exchanged about his taking part in the puzzle!

The palace was like a rest chamber built in the middle of a garden and the walls, circular in shape, ended in a conical roof. The roof was made of bright mirrors and the walls were panelled with sandal wood. Sidhanta moved closer to the wall, and slowly began to examine the nine doors, one by one. They were not wide, like

other palace doors, and not more than three or four people could enter at the same time. In a thoughtful mood, he walked back to the centre of the palace and gazed at each door once more with deep concentration. He noticed citizens watching him with interest, and closed his eyes for a while. His hand dug deep into his beard, he wondered what King Parakram had in his mind. Nine doors—and that meant nine answers to the attractive birthday puzzle!

Opening his eyes he observed the walls again, taking a longer time than before. His fingers began to pull his beard harder,





and slowly his eyes brightened up. He smiled broadly. Silently he paid a compliment to the intelligence of his beloved King Parakram.

The 'durbar' hall of the main palace was packed to capacity. Citizens, big and small, young and old, had assembled to hear the king make the announcement about the winner of the birthday puzzle. Many could not gain entrance for want of space, and they stood out awaiting the announcement. At a ceremonial moment, Parakram, accompanied by his queen, entered the hall, and the assembly rose

in respect. He bowed to his people and then sat on his precious throne, the queen occupying hers slightly behind him. Her chief maid held a gold tray with a silver casket, sealed and locked. Gently she held the tray before Queen Kumudini and the lovely royal consort took the casket and held it aloft for all to see. It contained the solution to the birthday puzzle, and in another few moments the answers would be out!

Excitement ran high in the audience, and whispers filled the hall, until the king rose to speak. "Beloved citizens of our kingdom, greetings and best wishes to you all on this joyous occasion. The moment for which all of us were waiting has come. Many have taken part in the contest and the answers submitted by them are all in the chest behind the palace-administrator, who will examine the answers as soon as the queen opens the casket and reads out the answers. Once you know the answer, you will know within your hearts, whether you have won or not. And the person who has given the correct answer may come forward and be indentified. This will save time; we need not sift through

the chest of answers. Now I request the queen to open the casket and read out the solution to the birthday puzzle!"

Queen Kumudini opened the casket and took out the palm-leaf on which the answer had been written months ago by the king. Excitement was now at its peak, and then, the queen began to read....

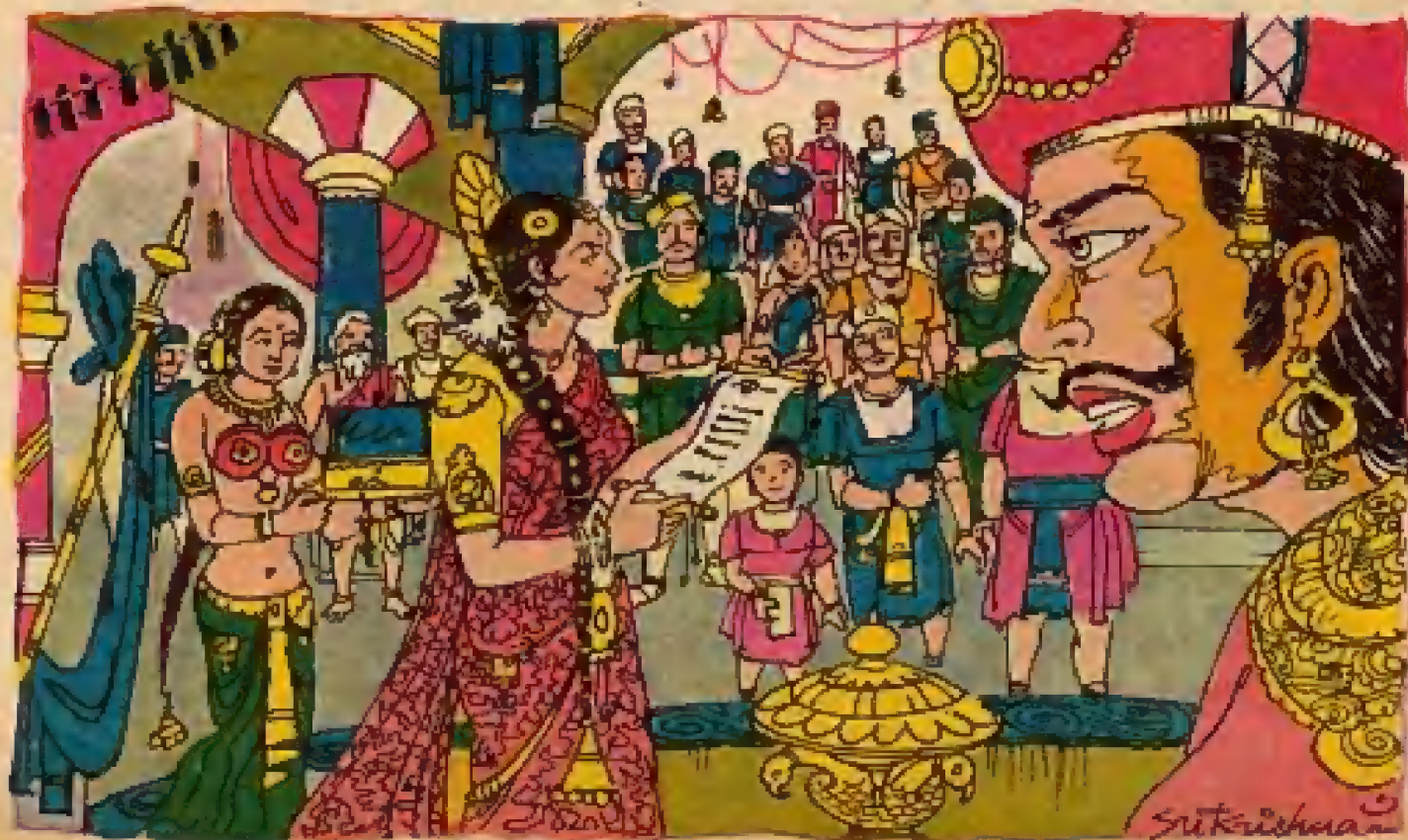
"On the birthday, I shall with my queen enter the new circular palace through a tenth door which I shall construct the day before my birthday!"

Ripples of whispers, low groans, and murmurs filled the hall, as people gazed at one

another at the surprising answer to the solution. They looked disappointed that they could not think of that solution. Gone was the chance of winning such a fabulous prize!

And the only person who came forward smiling softly was Sidhanta! He was, obviously the only one who had given the correct answer.

"Your Majesty," Sidhanta began to speak explaining to the assembly how he had arrived at the correct solution to the puzzle. "The solution was not easy to find. I spent sleepless nights, since you threw at me the chal-



lenge that I try to find the answer. I know the royal mind, so inventive, so imaginative, so sharp that it will not think in a conventional manner. I let my brain overwork... and then I visited the palace. I spent many a precious moment in observation and deep thought. There were nine doors. I measured with my eyes and senses the distance between each door in the circular wall. The distance between two doors was the same—except at one place where there was a wider gap, more wall space was left there. I knew that my beloved king had planned to build another door there and enter through that door, the tenth one! Also, this birthday coincides with the

tenth anniversary of our victory against our Salukyas, a great triumph for our King. I grew certain about our king's intention to enter through a tenth door! Once I observed the extra space on the wall, I knew the answer. Your Majesty, now, you know that good luck normally comes only to those who work hard." Sidhanta bowed to the royal couple, and then to the people of Mallipuram, and sat down amidst thunderous applause and cheering.

King Parakram gave away the prizes to Sidhanta, showering praise on him, and wished his wise minister many more years of happy life, and service to the people of Mallipuram.



WHERE ARE THE HOLES?

A farmer from a village once paid a visit to the city. A fashionable store attracted his attention. He went in and gazed at different items with amusement in his eyes.

Appreciating a felt hat, he asked a salesman, "What's its price?"

The salesman knew that the farmer did not mean to buy it. "Ten thousand rupees!" he said.

The farmer nodded. "But where are the holes?"

"Holes? What holes? For what?"

"Holes for the ears of the ass to stick out of the cap, of course! You don't expect anyone but an ass to pay that price for this stuff!" replied the farmer.



NATURE'S KINGDOM

The Flying Frog

The tree frog becomes an efficient glider when it leaps into the air after an insect

What can hang by one toe from a twig, balance on a swaying reed beside a river or remain pressed flat high up on a vertical tree trunk?

The creatures which can do all these things are the acrobatic clowns of the world of amphibia—the tree frogs. Some kept in captivity have performed on a toy trapeze with all the skill of a circus acrobat.

In fact, they are better equipped than humans for this sort of performance because the tips of their fingers and toes are discs that are like suction pads. With them, the tree frog can hold on to smooth surfaces, even overhanging ones such as the underside of leaves.

Tree frogs can crawl into spaces under the loose bark of trees or into other crevices where their enemies cannot get to them.

This ability accounts for the success of the tree frog in the battle for survival against its enemies. Proof of this is provided by the fact that there are nearly 500 species of tree frog. There are some on nearly every continent, living in regions at sea level or high up among mountains.

They are like other frogs in needing moisture to lubricate their skins and the majority need water in which to lay their eggs.

Apart from this, they need little to remain alive. Insects are found almost everywhere and as tree frogs eat them, they do not have to search very far for a meal.

To see a tree frog catch a flying insect is to witness an interesting spectacle. As it leaps into the air, its arms and legs are held level with the body to make it an efficient glider.

When it lands, it spreads out its hands and feet as much as it can to make as big an area as possible to break its fall. In some species, even the stomach has suction properties which

anchor the frog to the spot on which it has landed.

As it flies through the air, brilliant specks of colour are revealed. Often these are red, orange or yellow and they are seen on the inside surfaces of the limbs and in the groin. Known as flash colours, they are concealed when the frog is resting.

Eyes that glisten like jewels are another tree-frog feature. Grey, green, golden...almost any tint you can think of exists in one species or another. In the iris are metallic specks of silver, copper or gold. Sometimes there is even a metallic gleam on the body, whose skin has the appearance of wax.

Changes in outside temperature or humidity may make the frog's skin change colour. Cells called chromatophores are responsible for this. There are dark ones which expand or contract, to darken or lighten the skin colour.

.....





"The Prince and the Pauper"



(Poor Tom Canty and young Edward, the King of England, look alike. They change places and John Canty mistakes Edward for his son.)

Listening to the ruffians who had gathered in the barn since he had fallen asleep, Edward realised that he had fallen among thieves of the worst order. Seeing him awake, Canty lurched over to him. "As thou canst see, thy father has joined up with rogues, even worse than himself. On account of that he is now a hunted man!"



Canty dragged Edward to the centre of the barn, where he was immediately surrounded by a sea of evil faces. "Who art thou, whelp?" a voice asked. "I am King of England," said he.

The reply was greeted with much merriment. Then a voice called out: "Let us pay homage to our king. Robe and crown and throne him!" Before the little victim could say a word, he was crowned with a tin basin, robed in a tattered blanket and seated on a barrel.





The whole mangy mob baited him for some time before he was allowed to go away and hide in a corner of the barn, where presently someone came and brought him some food. At early dawn, the troop of vagrants set forward on their march. Now all the gaiety was gone from the company, as they marched sullen-faced under a lowering sky.



About noon, after a long and weary tramp, the gang came to a halt outside a large village, where they scattered to enter the village at different points to ply their different trades. "Now hark," said Hugo, coming up to Edward. "Thy work is to act as decoy while I beg. Refuse and it will be the worse for thee! Look—here comes a kindly face now!"

Immediately Hugo began to groan and moan and totter about; and when the stranger was close to hand, he sprawled before him "I am racked with hunger, Sir," he groaned. "A penny, a penny to buy a little food, I beg thee!"





"A penny! Thou shall have three, poor creature," the gentleman fumbled in his pocket with nervous haste. "Come hither, boy," he called to Edward. "Help me carry thy stricken brother back to your house." "I am not his brother," Edward said coldly. "And waste not your money on him. He is nothing but a beggar and a thief!"



The gentleman's attitude changed at once, and he promptly began to belabour Hugo with his staff. At this point Edward took to his heels...

Free from the gang at last, Edward walked for hours through the deserted countryside. When night was falling he came upon a barn, which was empty save for a calf. Exhausted he sank on the ground beside it and slept, and the calf in time did the same. Being a simple creature it was not at all troubled by the fact that it was sleeping with a king.





Edward awoke to the sound of someone moving around outside the barn. The next moment the barn door opened, and there before him stood John Canty, with his son Hugo at his side.

Edward, as became his royalty, pretended to be indifferent to the indignities that were heaped upon him. But at last unable to stand it any longer he seized a staff from the hands of one of the outlaws, and felled Hugo to the ground with a single blow.



Once more, Edward was in John Canty's hands, and once more soon afterwards, he found himself roving with the tramps and outlaws that Canty had gathered around him. During the next two or three weeks, they all travelled along the roads of England. Hugo tormented him in every way he could.



Consumed with anger and shame, Hugo sprang to his feet, seized another staff and came at his small adversary in a fury. But he stood no chance whatsoever when pitted against an arm which had been trained by the best masters in Europe in the art of the single stick and quarter-staff.



THE BURGLAR'S BRAINWAVE

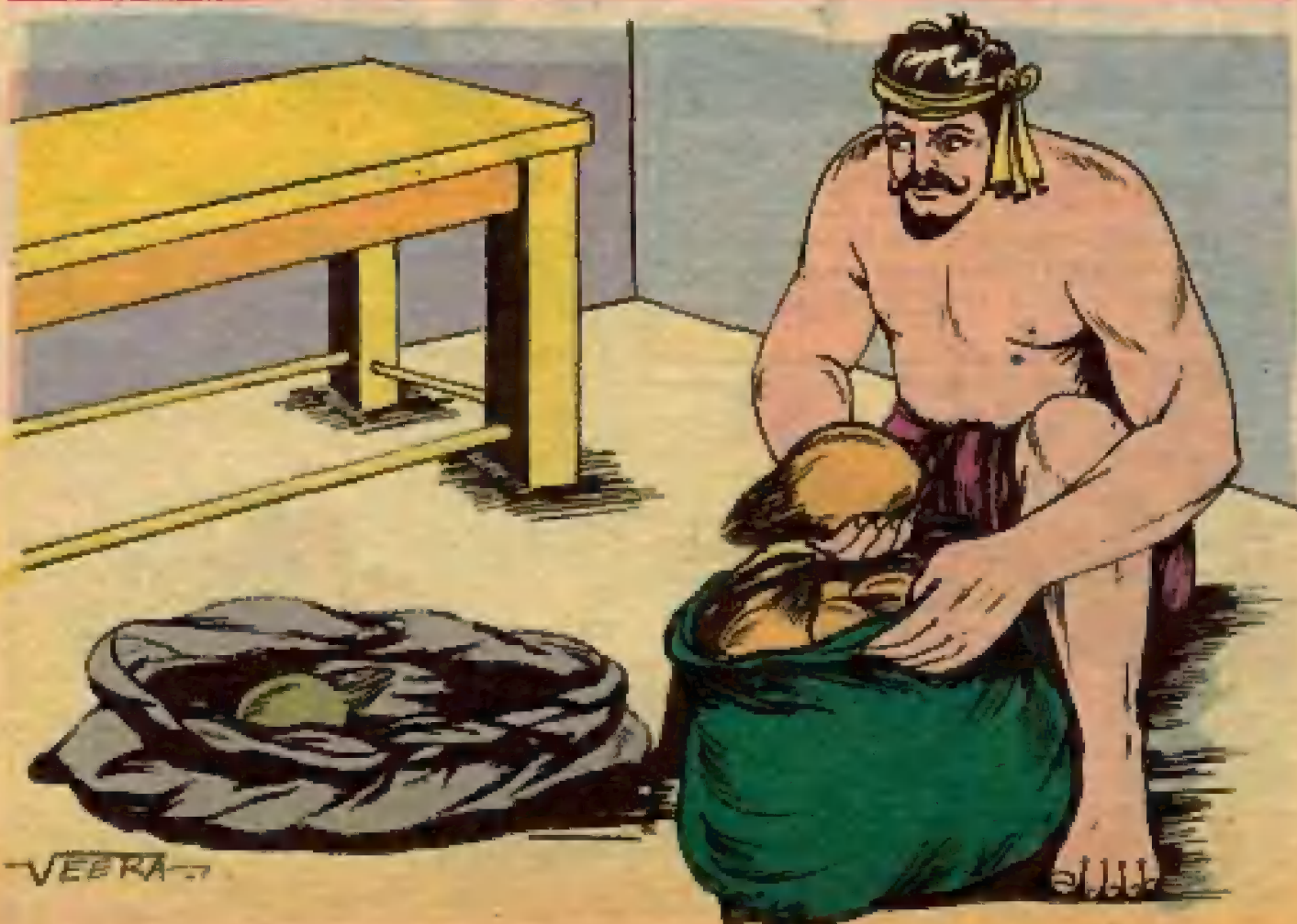
One night a burglar entered a wealthy farmer's house by scaling the wall. He looked for some valuable property, but saw nothing. The farmer had stored his wealth and valuable household goods in a couple of rooms and had locked them so securely that the burglar found no possibility of laying his hand on them.

He found a dozen of coconuts kept in a sack. Deciding to carry something rather than return

empty-handed, he put the coconuts in a bag. The bag slinging on his back, he scaled the wall again and descended on the road.

As luck would have it, a sepoy who was on his night round saw the burglar and gave him a chase. In a short while the burglar was caught.

In the morning he was led to the king's court with the bag of coconuts on his head. The sepoy told the king how he was



captured almost red-handed.

"Cut off one of his hands!" said the king. Then looking at the burglar, he asked, "What have you to say to this?"

The burglar threw the bag down on the floor and said, "My lord, I believe all the coconuts are broken!"

"You are to lose your hand. What do you say to that?" asked the king again.

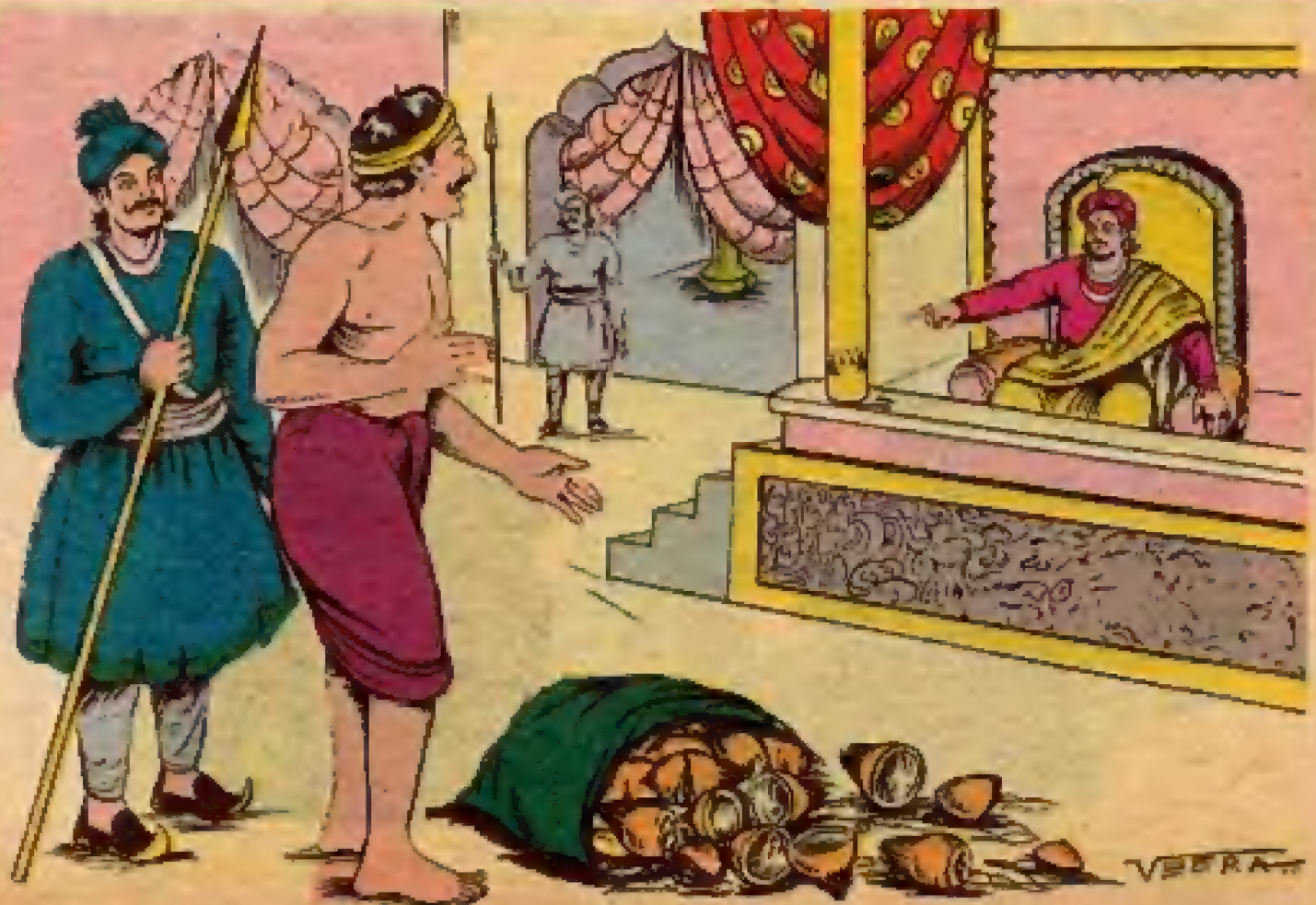
"My lord, my regret is, the coconuts have lost their religious sanctity!" said the thief.

"What do you mean?" asked the king.

"My lord, if a devotee breaks one coconut before the deity, the deity is pleased with him. I have broken a full dozen coconuts before the king. But the king continues to be angry with me. Should we not wonder as to what happened to this sacred fruit?" answered the burglar.

The king laughed. "If the fellow deserves to lose his hand for his crime, he deserves to retain it for his presence of mind—provided he gives up burglary," said the king.

The fellow bowed to the king and promised to lead a good life in future.



FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

A man paid a visit to a friend's house. The sun light was very bright outside, but the electric current had gone out and that is why the interior of the house was all dark.

"It is so dark!" he said as his hand touched a timepiece on a table.

He picked it up and hid it under his coat.

But within a minute his eyes got used to the darkness and he could see things. He then realised that others in the room must have observed his stealing the timepiece.

He stood quite embarrassed.

Another man came in and exclaimed, "How dark it is!"

"It is dark," the first visitor said. "But if you keep this timepiece just for a minute under your coat, things should become more and more clear."

With a broad grin he handed out the timepiece to the second visitor.





*New Tales of King Vikram
and the Vampire*

PORTRAIT FOR THE PRINCESS

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. Roars of thunder were interspersed with howls of jackals, and eerie laughter of ghosts. Flashes of lightning showed fearful faces.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground the vampire that possessed the corpse observed, "O King, I hope, you are not led by whims in your adventure at such an unearthly hour of the night. Who does not know that the kings often conduct themselves whimsically? Let me give you an example to illustrate my point."

The vampire went on: Princess Chandrawati, daughter of King Vasantasen of Shripur was a beauty non pareil. But one day the king thought, "My



child, like any human being, shall gradually grow old and lose her charm. Cannot we capture her beauty in a portrait?"

On being acquainted with his thought, his minister said, "I know of an artist who is believed to be a genius. We can entrust him with the task of drawing a portrait of our princess."

The artist the minister spoke of was Kalasagar. He was summoned to the palace. After having a glimpse of the princess, he told the king, "My lord, I shall consider it a great opportunity to draw Princess

Chandrawati's portrait. But it will be necessary for me to know the outlines of the three generations past of the princess—both on her mother's and her father's side. This knowledge will enable me to make the portrait quite lively."

The king sat thoughtful. His queen was the daughter of a tribal lady, though her father was a king. This was a fact known to very few. King Vasantasen did not wish Kalasagar to know this.

"My lord, if you do not approve of my procedure, you may commission my brother Chitrasagar, who lives in Avanti, to draw the portrait. He does not need to be told the story of his subject's past generations," said Kalasagar.

The king invited Chitrasagar to the palace. He came and said, "My lord, should you wish me to draw a lively portrait, you must allow me to spend an hour with the princess privately."

"Why?" asked the king, not very happy about the condition.

"If I am with the princess, I'll come to know all the important things about her three past generations. I need not ask her anything. That will help me in drawing her portrait."

The king kept quiet. At that Chitrasagar added, "There is no reason for you to hesitate about it, my lord. Last month I was commissioned to draw a portrait of the princess of Avanti. Although I never asked her about anything in particular during our private meeting, I could spontaneously learn that her grandmother was a gifted musician. That knowledge helped me to give a special touch to her portrait!"

"Thank you. But I cannot agree to your condition," said the king though he paid Chitrasagar for the pains he had taken in visiting him.

"The only great artist who can draw the portrait of the princess without such condition is my third brother, Rekhasagar. He lives in the court of Sovangarh."

At the king's invitation Rekhasagar visited Shripur and drew the portrait. All marvelled at the picture when it was completed. The king congratulated the artist and rewarded him amply.

"My lord, I am most touched by your kindness. I have done my best. But I cannot call my work perfect. Perfect portraits can be drawn only by my two brothers, Kalasagar and



Chitrasagar," said Rekhasagar while taking leave of the king.

The minister informed the king that Kalasagar had just drawn the portrait of a chieftain named Subir Singh. The king summoned Kalasagar again and asked him, "I understand that you have drawn Subir Singh's portrait. You must have heard from him all about his past three generations. Was there anything remarkable in the character of his late grandfather?"

"My lord, it is true that I had known about his three generations. But I don't remember a thing. The memory of such things remains in me

only till the work is completed. That is the peculiarity of my mind," answered Kalasagar.

"Very well, you can draw my daughter's portrait," said the king and he directed the minister to tell the artist every important thing about three royal generations frankly.

When Kalasagar completed the portrait everybody agreed that it was superb, that if the princess stood beside the portrait it would be difficult to distinguish one from the other.

Kalasagar was given an ovation, apart from rewards.

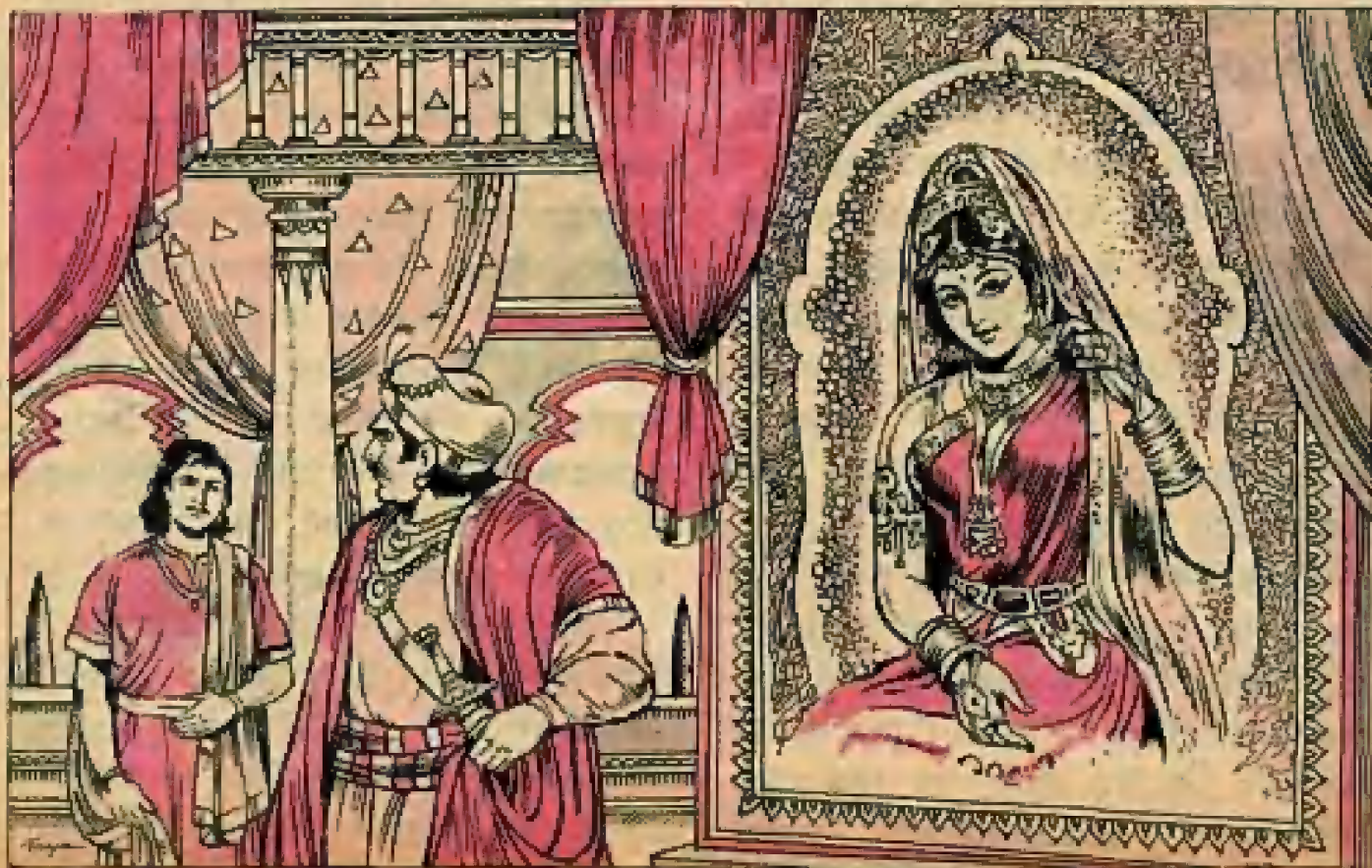
Just then Chitrasagar happened to be at Shripur. He

met the king and said, "My lord, I do not need to have a private talk with the princess. Allow me to spend just a day alone with the portrait Kalasagar has drawn and I'll come to know the past three generations of the princess."

The queen and the princess were willing to give him the chance.

"No. Thanks," said the king. Chitrasagar went back disappointed.

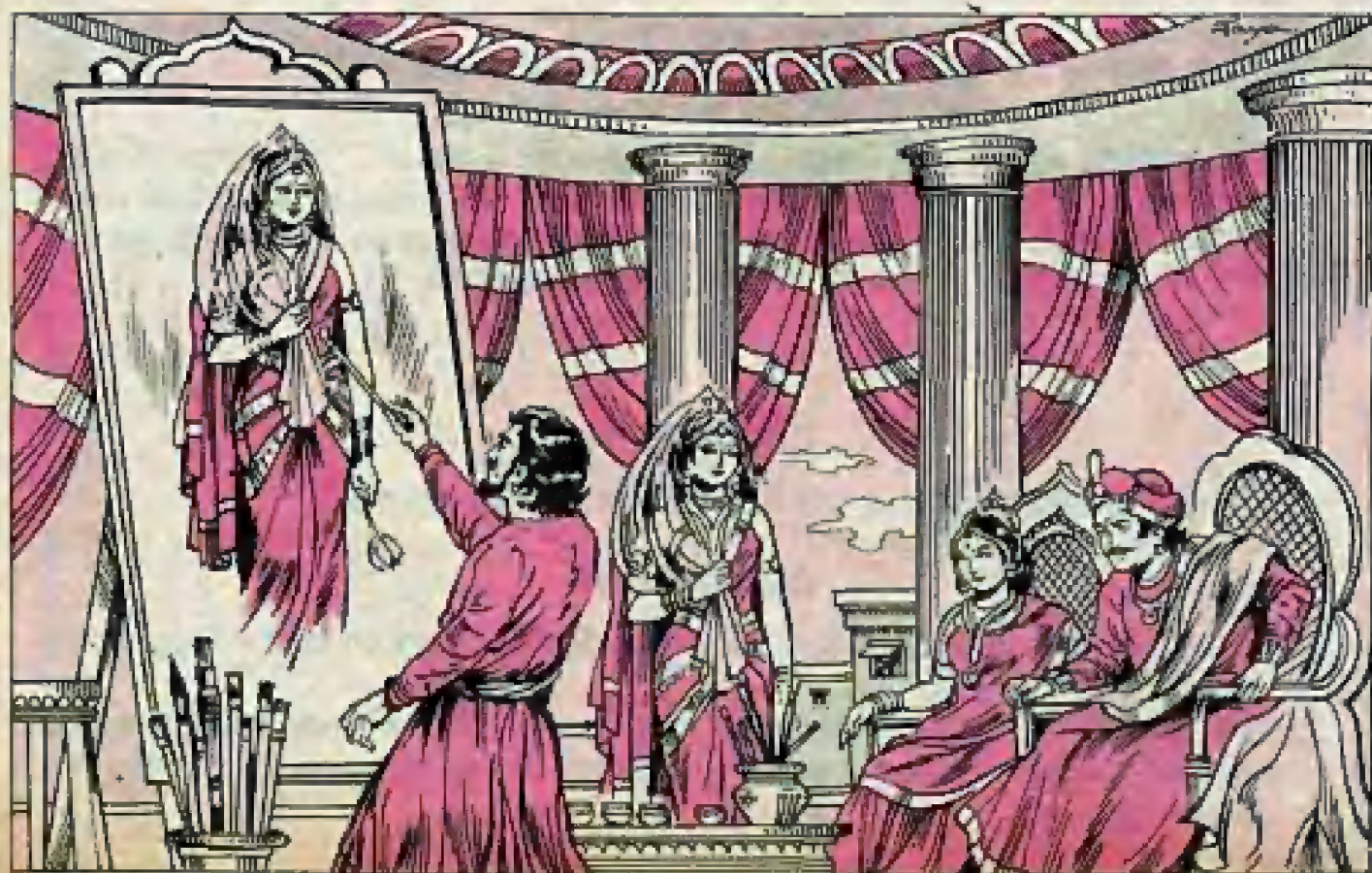
The king sent the portrait drawn by Rekhasagar to the public art gallery, but kept the one drawn by Kalasagar in the bed-room of the princess.



The vampire paused for a moment and then asked the king in a challenging tone: "O King, was it not purely whimsical of King Vasantasen to reject Chitrasagar's offer even after Chitrasagar changed his condition? Secondly, why did the king let the portrait drawn by Rekhasagar to be publicly exhibited and not the better one drawn by Kalasagar? Answer me if you can. Should you keep mum despite your knowledge of the fact, your head would roll off your neck!"

Forthwith answered King Vikram, "There was nothing whimsical on the part of the

king. He was acting prudently. Rekhasagar made no demand to know the history of the royal family and so he was commissioned to do the portrait. Kalasagar's memory was such that he did not remember a thing of his subject's history once the portrait was done. But Chitrasagar's case was different. During their first meeting the king must have taken note of his speaking about the grandmother of the Princess of Avanti. In the same way he was likely to disclose the secret about king Vasantasen's mother-in-law! That is why his





offer was rejected.

"The king did not let the portrait drawn by Kalasagar to be kept in the public art gallery because Chitrasagar might manage to spend a long time

with the portrait and know the history of the royal family!"

No sooner had King Vikram concluded his answer than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip!

CONTESTS FOR MAY' 83

Entries should reach the Editor, Chandamama (English), 188 Arcot Road Madras—600 026 on or before the 15th of May. A reward of Rs. 50.00 will go to the winner. When there are more than one winner, each will get a reward of Rs. 25.00 in each of the two categories.

CONTEST 'A'

Write in 200-250 words on "My Concept of Happiness".

CONTEST 'B'

1. Who was the famous Indian who pleaded for English to be taught in India?
2. The sapling of a tree from India is still alive after several centuries in another country. Write about it (who carried the sapling and why) in about 20 words.



THE RIGHT MAN

The landlord of Anandpur was making arrangements for his daughter's marriage. Several sets of gold ornaments were to be made. He was not sure who among the goldsmiths of the town would be able to deliver the goods.

He entrusted his manager with the task of choosing the goldsmith who should prove honest and a good craftsman.

Several goldsmiths met the manager and expressed their readiness to take up the work. The manager, however, did not promise the work to anybody immediately.

He made inquiries and learnt that the best among the goldsmiths of the town were Sundar, Ravishankar and Yadu.

The manager summoned the three and handed over to each an old piece of ornament and

asked them to report to him whether they were of solid gold or not.

The goldsmiths came back the following day. Said Sundar, "Sir, the fellow who made this one must be a cheat. Only half of this piece is gold. The rest is inferior matter."

"Sir, the one who made this was a swindler. Only one-fourth of this is gold," reported Ravishankar.

Both Sundar and Ravishankar looked askance at the manager to find out whether he was pleased with their reports or not.

Yadu stepped forward next and returning the ornament, said, "Sir, about one-fourth of this piece is gold."

After they left, the manager told the landlord. "The work should be given to Yadu."



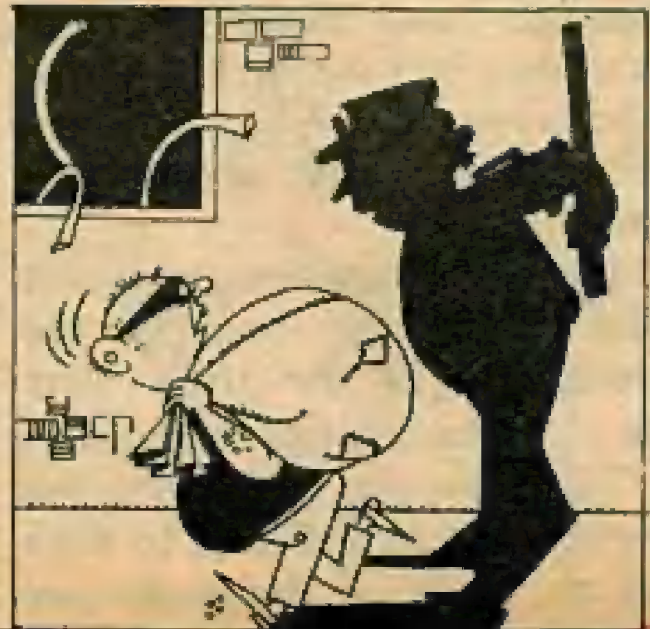
"Why?" asked the landlord.

"All the three are expert craftsmen. But Sundar and Ravishankar are not good men. In order to assert that they were honest, they branded the makers of those ornaments as dishonest. How were they sure that one who got these ornaments made had not wished

that they should be of mixed metal? Besides, all we had asked them was to determine the portion of gold in them, not to judge the character of their makers. Because Yadu is a good-natured man, he did not cast unnecessary aspersion on others."

"Right," said the landlord

SPOT THE TEN DIFFERENCES



THE FABULOUS DONKEY

There was a money-lender who was very unkind towards those who borrowed from him. He charged a high rate of interest and did not excuse a pie even to the poorest of his clients.

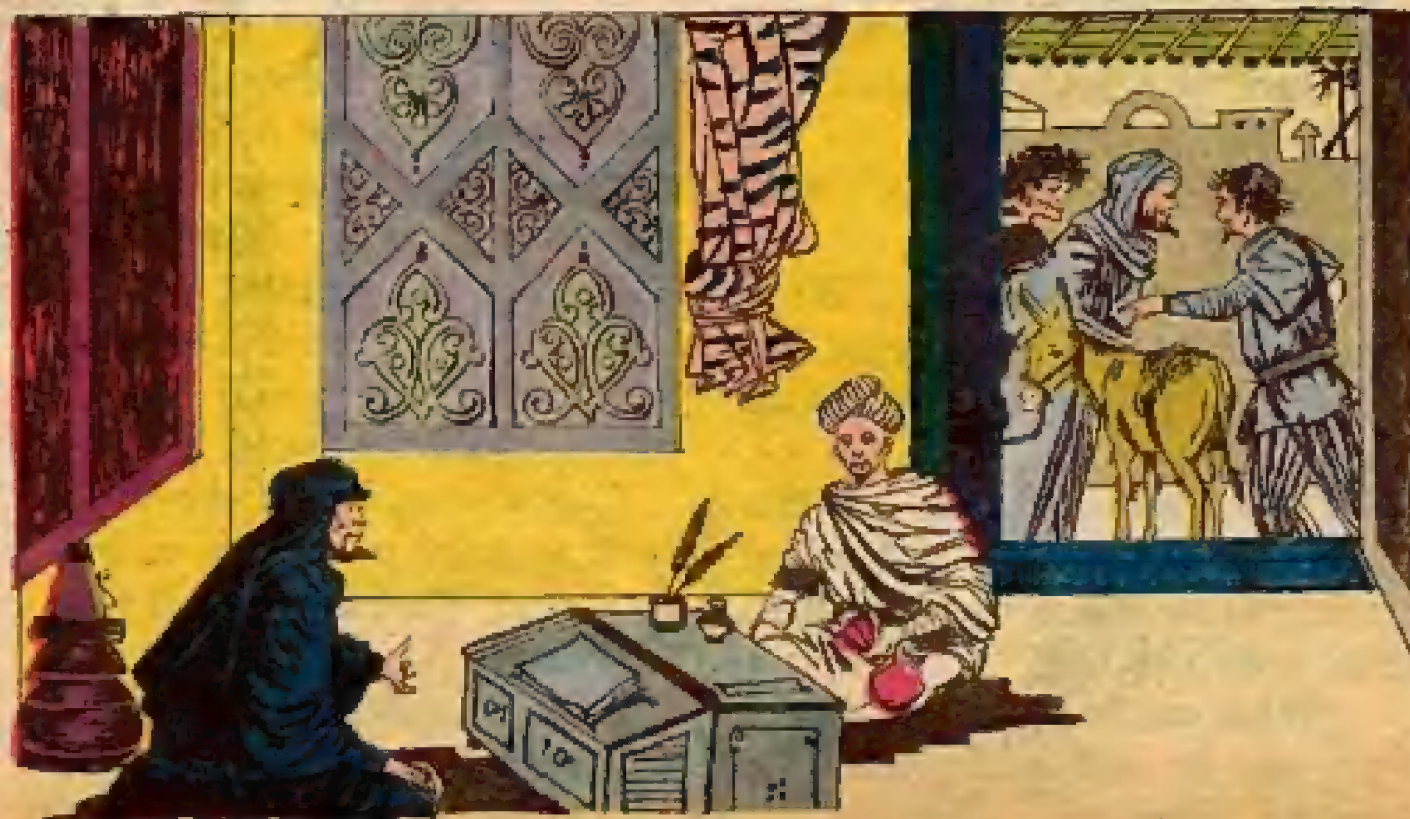
His greed was boundless. He went on gathering money, but never enjoyed it.

What was worse, he thought himself very clever and boasted of it every now and then. "I'm yet to see a man who can deceive or hoodwink me!" was his favourite exclamation.

Four young men decided to take up the challenge. One of them went to his house riding a donkey. He tied the donkey to a pole of his verandah and saluted him and said, "Sir, I want change for a few dirhams!"

"Welcome, but I will keep my commission," said the money-lender. The young man agreed to it. The money-lender began counting the small coins for the dirhams.

Soon the other three young men arrived there. With curiosity they began to examine





the donkey.

"At last we have got it. This is the one!" said one in a whisper.

"Sure!" asked another, excitedly.

"But I'm not so sure," said the third one.

"Let us not waste time. This is the donkey. Ask its owner for its price," whispered the other two.

They came closer to the owner of the donkey and asked him, "How much will you take for your donkey?"

"What made you think that I am out to sell it?" asked the owner, feigning annoyance.

"Please sell it to us. We will pay you a hundred dirhams!" said the three young men.

The money-lender looked at them with astonishment. Even a donkey of the finest kind did not cost more than ten dirhams. Why were these fellows willing to pay a hundred dirhams?

"Look here. We offer you a thousand dirhams!" the friends told the first young man again.

The money-lender could not believe his ears. Very eagerly he said, "Gentleman, if you are in dire need of a donkey, I can sell you one or two—I mean for the same price!"

The young men smiled at one another with ridicule for the money-lender and did not care to say a word to him.

"Come on, two thousand. Surely, we are not being unfair to you!" the friends told the owner in coaxing voices.

"If you are serious, pay ten thousand and take it. You know very well that you'll not be losers," said the owner gravely.

"Look here, friend, we do not have so much money on us. Five thousand. That is our final bid," they said.

"Not a farthing less than ten thousand."

"Don't be so obstinate,

friend."

"Who are you to call me obstinate? Either you pay the price I quote for my donkey or get out!"

They exchanged some harsh words and the owner of the donkey said that he won't sell his donkey to them even if they were willing to pay him what he demanded. The three friends went away and sat down under a tree on the road.

"Young man, nobody can dream of getting five thousand dirhams for a donkey. Why don't you sell it?" the money-lender asked the first young man.

"Sir, what do you know of the mystery of this donkey? If they are not fools to offer me five thousand for it, I'm not going to be a fool to sell it for less than ten thousand. You don't know how gifted my donkey is—that if let loose at midnight it can lead one to spots where money lies buried!"

The young man then went out and sat in a nearby restaurant. Instantly the other three young men came back and said to the money-lender, "Sir, the fellow has got angry with us. He won't sell the donkey to us. Will you please buy it from him? Let him



take ten thousand dirhams. We'll give you a hundred dirhams for your help."

"Hundred won't do."

"Then you'll have two hundred. Please buy it for us before the fellow goes away," the three friends said imploringly.

The money-lender went to the restaurant and took his seat near the first young man and proposed to buy his donkey for ten thousand dirhams. The young man accepted the proposal. The money-lender brought the amount from his home and gave it to the young man and took hold of the donkey. The young man went away.

The money-lender wondered if it won't be clever on his part to keep the donkey to himself. In any case he could bargain for a better price.

"Come on young men, have the donkey—but not for a price less than twenty thousand dirhams!" he told the young men. "Otherwise I'm going to keep it."

"We have decided to go without the donkey, for it may not be the donkey we were looking for," said the three friends and then they began to walk away.

"Stop!" shrieked out the money-lender, "Pay what I have paid for it plus the two hundred you promised me and take it away."

"Did we not say that you can keep the donkey?" The three friends did not stop.

"Listen all, ho!" shouted the money-lender. People gathered around him. "What's the matter?" they asked.

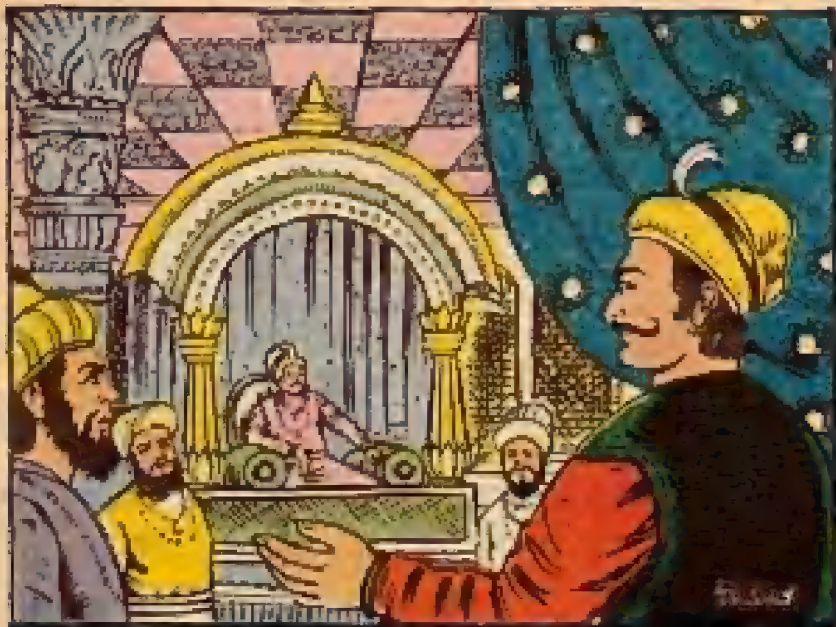
"I bought the donkey for ten thousand dirhams upon these fellows assuring me that they will buy it from me. Now they refuse to do so!" complained the money-lender.

"You paid ten thousand for a donkey? Are you that crazy?" asked someone and all had a hearty laugh.

The three young men pretended not to understand anything. In the crowd some thought that the money-lender was bluffing; others thought that he had lost his sanity.

What he really lost was an amount of nine thousand nine hundred ninetyfive dirhams, for the donkey he had got could be valued at five dirhams, after all!





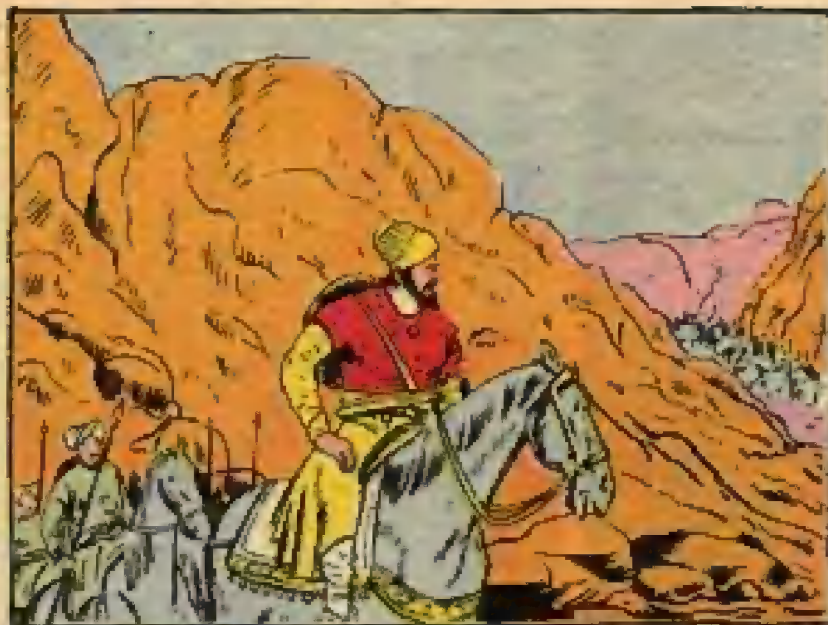
STORY OF INDIA-77 RANA PRATAP DEFIES AKBAR

Akbar won over most of the Rajput rulers through his policy of appeasement, but not Rana Pratap, the Prince of Mewar. Valiant and independent-minded, he decided never to submit to Akbar's authority. But Akbar was determined to annex Mewar. He planned for fulfilling his scheme with Mansingh and others.

Akbar had earlier made an attack on Chitore, the capital of Mewar. Pratap's father, Rana Udai Singh, had then abandoned it and fled to the forest. But two brave Rajput generals, Jaimalla and Punnu, defended the fort with great courage. Akbar could not make any headway in capturing the fort.

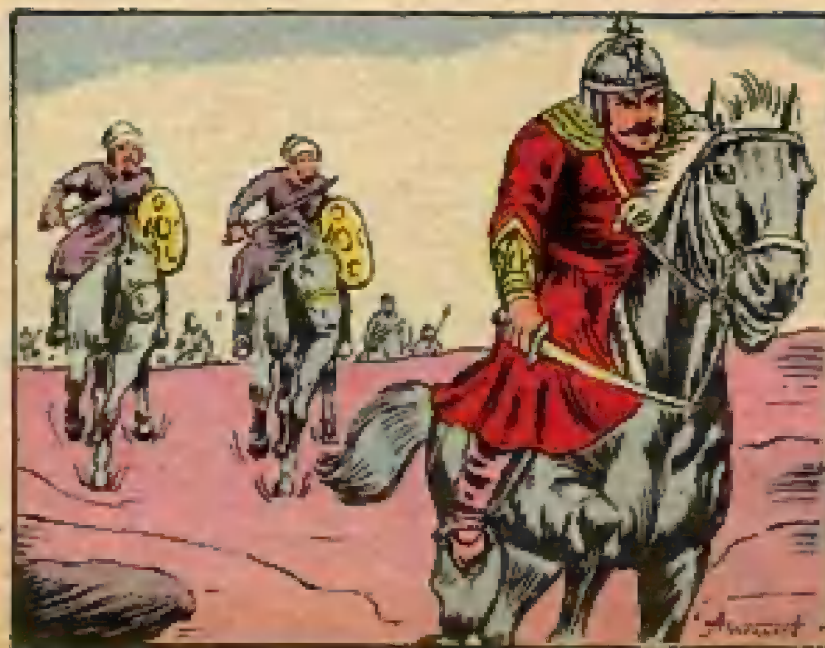


One night Akbar was going on a round of his camp when he noticed some Rajputs, torches in hands, examining the fort-wall on the hill. Instantly Akbar snatched a soldier's gun and shot at one of the Rajputs. It so happened that his victim was Jaimalla.

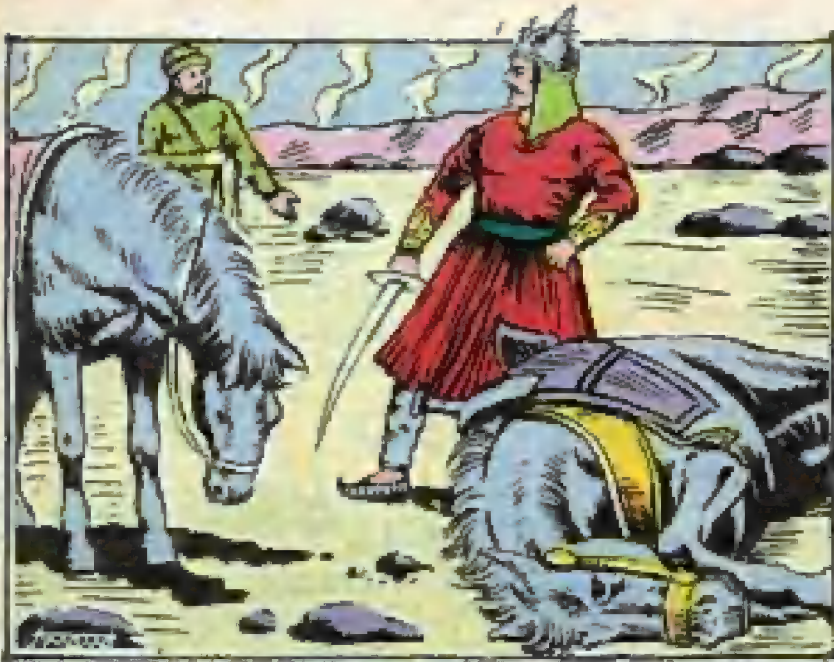


Punnu had died earlier. With Jaimalla's death, Chitore became Akbar's. In the morning two thousand Rajput soldiers escaped in a novel way. They bound the hands of their women and children and led them through Akbar's camp. Akbar's men thought them to be their own soldiers carrying the prisoners.

However, back in Delhi, Akbar built two gigantic statues of Jaimalla and Punnu showing them in the position of riding stone horses in front of his fort. This he did in acknowledgement of the bravery of these two heroes who impressed him deeply.

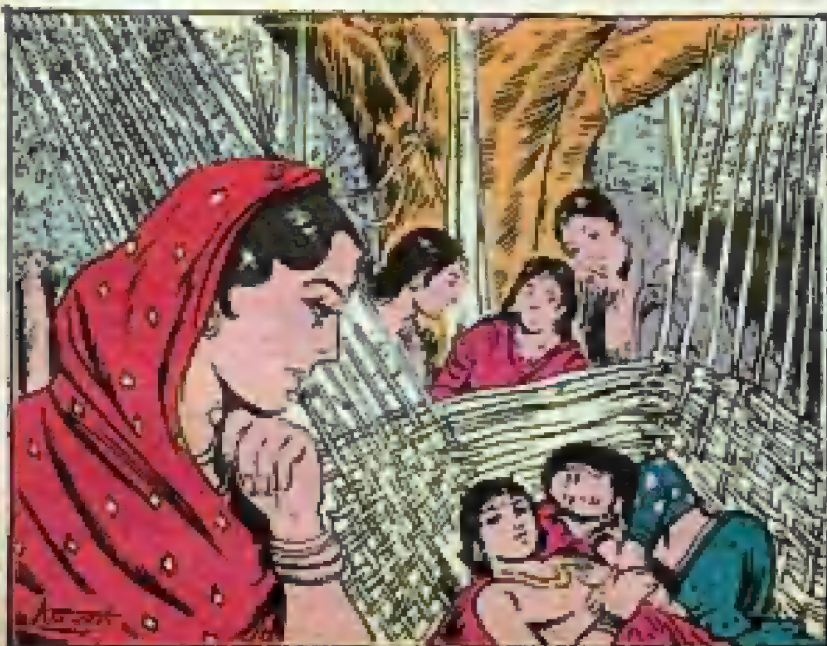


Although Chitor fell Rana Pratap did not stop fighting the Mughals. Even his brother, Sukta, joined Akbar. One day down the slopes of a range of hills, the Mughal army headed by Asaf Khan, Sukta and Prince Selim pursued Pratap who rode his faithful horse Chaitak.



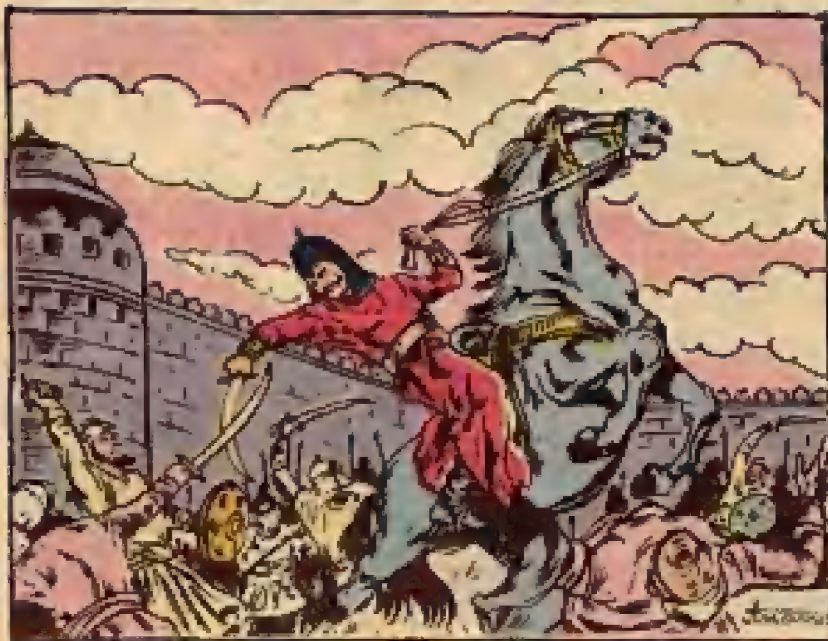
Chaitak was wounded and exhausted. Yet it ran like a gust of wind. "O Rider of the Grey Horse!" someone shouted from behind. It was Sukta. He caught up with Pratap and said, "Your horse is dying. Take my horse!" Chaitak lay dead. Pratap escaped with his brother's horse.

Pratap moved with his queen and children from forest to forest, bearing untold hardship. Once when the enemy was closing in on his family, the Bhils of the forests put his children in their baskets and carried them out of danger.



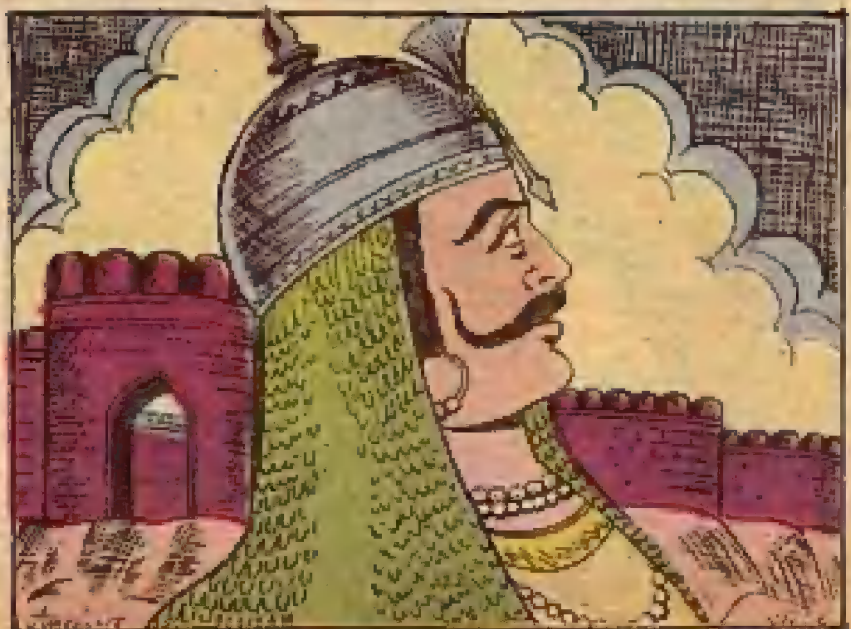
Pratap's children lived on wild fruits and slept in swings hanging from trees. (The rings supporting their swings can still be seen in the forest near Jawura.) They went through untold hardship, yet Pratap did not surrender.

One day a wild cat snatched a grass-cake from his daughter's hand and ran away. The little princess cried, for that was her sole food for the day. Tears rolled down Rana Pratap's cheeks at the sight. Even then he did not surrender. Every hardship brought him greater determination.



With exemplary courage Rana Pratap kept up fighting. Slowly he won back area after area of Mewar from the Mughals. He was the sole Rajput king who never submitted himself to Akbar's authority.

Rana Pratap remains one of the greatest figures in the history of India. He is synonymous with the legendary Rajput chivalry and heroism. He died in 1597, free and partly victorious against a mighty adversary.





QUEER QUESTIONS

The Princess of Simhapuri was as beautiful as she was witty. She was the only child of the king. One to marry her was to succeed the king to the throne.

Simhapuri was a vast kingdom. There were several smaller kingdoms around it. The rulers of these smaller territories owed their allegiance to the king of Simhapuri.

The king had begun to collect information about all the eligible princes.

"Father, leave the choice of my bridegroom to me," the princess, who understood her father's mind, told the king.

"How can you choose when you do not know any of them?" asked the affectionate father.

"Father, convene an assembly of the princes just as it is done for a Swayamvara. The only

condition is, to prove one's eligibility one must be able to answer my questions," said the princess.

The king agreed to this. The princes presented themselves at his invitation. At the appointed hour the king, the minister and the princess came out to the audience hall. The princess and the minister took their seats at a lower level beside the king.

The princess handed out a slip of paper to the minister. The minister stood up and, addressing the assembly, said, "Our princess has three questions to put to the august audience. One who can give the correct answer before I have finished counting fifty, will stand the chance to marry our princess."

Then he read out the questions: "Which material



object that looks dark has no weight at all? Which large bird has one hundred and twentyfour eyes? Which wild animal breathes only once a year?"

The minister began counting. All the princes looked thoughtful and pensive.

The minister had counted up to forty when the prince of Vikramgarh stood up and said, "The correct answer to these questions is, there are no such object, bird or animal. They exist in the fanciful imagination of the princess."

Many looked surprised at the answer. They looked at the princess, fearing her

displeasure.

But the princess was seen smiling. "This is correct," she whispered to the minister. "It is in vain that others are looking for a different answer. Some of them know that the question is fanciful, but they are afraid of saying so."

"In other words the prince of Vikramgarh is intelligent and courageous. Why then delay, my child?" asked the minister.

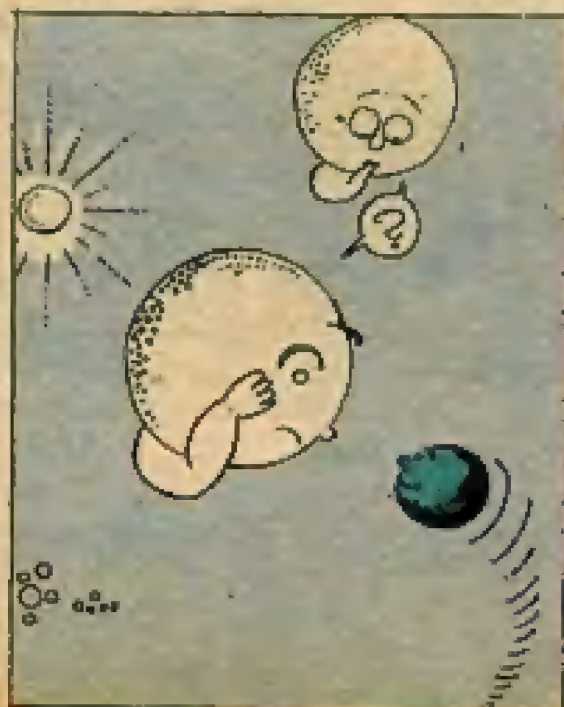
The chief maid of the princess came forward with a large garland. The king signalled the prince to come forward. The princess garlanded him amidst a thunderous applause.

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NEWS FLASH

A Guest in Solar System?

Astronomers suspect that a 'foreign' planet might have intruded into our solar system. They observe Neptune and Uranus slightly deviating from their regular movement. "A mysterious object—a planet or perhaps a 'brown dwarf'—seem to be tugging them off course," reports the *Science Digest* (U.S.A.)



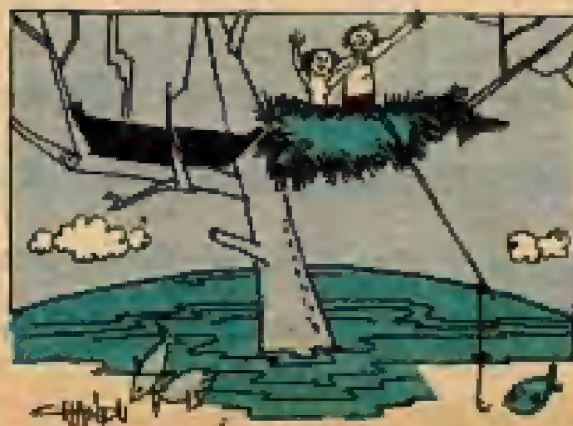
The Indefatigable Bowler

The *New Times* (U.S.S.R.) reports that James Hartmann, an U.S. Army sergeant, has set a new world record, bowling for 156 hours and 20 minutes with five-minute breaks every hour. The former record according to the Guinness Book (1983) was 155 hours and four minutes.



Home on a Tree

During the recent flood in Argentina a couple climbed a tree and spent two months on it. They built a hut on a few boughs. A small boat tied to the tree served as their kitchen. They could catch fish galore sitting on a branch before their nice little hut.





Where is Formosa? What is its importance?

—Radhamohan, Varanasi.

Formosa is the other name of Taiwan, an island a little over 150 Km to the south-east of China. It was included in the old Chinese empire, but went over to Japan in 1895. It returned to China again in the forties of this century. In 1949 the Communists ousted the Kuomintang, Party from power from the mainland. Chiang Kai-shek, the Kuomintang leader, shifted his Government to Taiwan. They call Taiwan the Nationalist China while the mainland is known as the People's Republic of China.



What is UNICEF?

—K. Ramanathan, Cuddalore.

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.

Is it true that if we consume rice as our daily food our minds become blunt?

—Jayashree S. Murthy,
Bangalore.

Not at all.

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



Mr. Chandrapal Singh



Mr. K.S. Vijayaker

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama, to reach us by 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs.50/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

The Prize for March '83 goes to:—

Ms. J. Anupa, 1-A Teachers Colony,
East Marredpally, Secunderabad 26. (A.P)

The Winning Entry:— 'Looking Yonder' — 'Plucking Wonder'

PICKS FROM THE WISE

The reason why worry kills more people than work is that more people worry than work.

—Robert Frost.

If people are unwilling to hear you, better it is to hold your tongue than them.

—Lord Chesterfield.

He that hath a head of wax must not walk in the sun.

—George Herbert.

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